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THESIS

**THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHANCELLOR:
GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS, THE 2002-2003 IRAQ
CRISIS, AND THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN STATECRAFT**

by

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June 2008

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GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS, THE 2002-2003 IRAQ CRISIS, AND THE
ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN STATECRAFT**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the influence of personal bias in the political leaders in the U.S.-German dispute in 2002-2003 over the Iraq campaign and the nature of the Atlantic Alliance in the 21st century in the face of a new international security environment.

The focus is on the life experiences and the crucial influence of the two national-level decision-makers, President George W. Bush and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The thesis examines the course of events and the shifts in foreign policy after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, in the two countries, in order to analyze the origins of the dispute. The study finds that the personalities and personal biases of the two protagonists at times outweighed and at times reflected political, strategic, and cultural factors during the escalation of the dispute between the traditionally close transatlantic allies. Examples of relationships between German and U.S. national leaders from the 1970s to the 1990s show that personality had always been a decisive factor in the bi-lateral relationship, but that statecraft and diplomacy prevented the escalation of policy disagreements and avoided the immoderate personalization of politics.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The shadow of the impending Iraq campaign in September 2002 caused the traditionally close relationship between the United States and Germany to lurch into a crisis of discord and misunderstanding. The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, in the final phase of his re-election campaign, in which the opinions of East German voters opposed to the prospective U.S.-led intervention loomed large, announced the refusal of any German participation in the prospective war in Iraq. Furthermore, he warned the United States not to wage a war against the regime in Baghdad. In response, U.S. President George W. Bush alleged that Germany was breaking the strong and peaceful NATO alliance that had overcome the threats of the Cold War. In the aftermath of this political argument, public statements by both protagonists led to a further decline in the bilateral relationship that had heretofore been an unshakable front in the Atlantic Alliance.

A. PURPOSE

This thesis investigates the influence of personal bias in the political leaders in the U.S.-German dispute in 2002-2003 over the Iraq campaign and the nature of the Atlantic Alliance in the 21st century in the face of a new international system of states. Since bias “is a predisposition to address an issue or react to others in a certain way,”¹ it is necessary to investigate the experiences and influences that shaped the characters of George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder. Therefore, this thesis reviews the principal experiences of these political leaders, with particular attention to events and views regarding the U.S.-German relationship. The result of this analysis will be compared to the relationships between some of the predecessors of both heads of government during the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. Tensions within the post-1945 U.S.- Federal

¹ MSN Encarta, <http://encarta.msn.com> (accessed December 12, 2007).

German relationship unquestionably occurred before, but had never led to a situation comparable to the 2002-2003 discord. Traditionally, the transatlantic relationship between Germany and the United States has influenced NATO directly and has constituted a source of stability and continuity over the decades. This thesis examines the question: To what extent did the personal view of the transatlantic relationship held by Bush and Schröder contribute to the severe dispute in 2002-2003? How can an analysis of this question be integrated into the existing knowledge of the Atlantic Alliance, NATO, U.S.-German relations and the record of diplomacy and statecraft?

B. IMPORTANCE

How nations deal with each other, as well as relationships among heads of government, have a crucial influence on the world's potential for conflict. In a peaceful political environment, the risk of war is much smaller than in situations of tension. Besides the two absolute stages of war and peace, there are numerous bi- and multilateral interactions that shape the international security environment.

This thesis explores the crucial influence of national-level decision-makers on international relations, in a case study of exceptional force and enduring relevance, for students of theory as well as for those engaged in statecraft. A better grasp of individual factors may provide a basis for political leaders to prevent discord or at least understand unexpected reactions. The analysis is offered by a contemporary observer of these events and a member of the German armed forces engaged in advanced study in an American graduate school. Now that five years have passed since this episode in the German-American relationship, the present study offers some tentative explanations for the uproar between Washington and Berlin in the first years of the new century.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is common practice to investigate issues in international relations from different perspectives or on different levels. The theoretical analysis of Kenneth N. Waltz has, for decades, been the best known level-categorization. According to Waltz, there are three levels (or images) of theoretical analysis regarding the causes of war and other political events.² The first level is focused on the nature and behavior of man, and hence can be named the individual level. The second level focuses on the sovereign state itself, rather than on the individuals within this state. The third level of analysis takes the state system into consideration.

1. The Level of Analysis

Several scholars have discussed the pros and cons of a systemic (third level) or a sub-systemic level of analysis. For example, J. David Singer has written, "The systemic level produces a more comprehensive and total picture of international relations than does the national or sub-systemic level. On the other hand, the atomized and less coherent image produced by the lower level of analysis is somewhat balanced by its richer detail, greater depth, and more intensive portrayal."³

Since the period under investigation in this thesis is relatively short, and additionally focused on the discord caused by the Iraq War, this thesis concentrates on the individual level. As Singer noted, "As to explanation, there seems little doubt that the sub-systemic or actor orientation is considerably more fruitful, permitting as it does a more thorough investigation of the processes by which foreign policies are made."⁴ In this thesis, the focus is on two key individuals, George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder. In Robert Isaak's words, the

² Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

³ J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* 14, no. 1, The International System: Theoretical Essays (October, 1961), 98.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

thesis is based on “the assumption that the study of international politics is meaningless unless one begins by analyzing individuals.”⁵

Given the decision to pursue the individual level of analysis, it is necessary to ask about the factors that may have influenced the decision-makers. This question is answered on at least two levels: the decision-makers’ personal experience, as well as the political environment that affected the process of decision making and its subsequent practical implementation. As Stephen Walt has observed, “once the policy design is complete, the time-consuming work of overcoming bureaucratic resistance, legal constraints, fatigue, and partisan opposition still remains.”⁶

2. Literature on the Iraq Crisis

The quarrel over the Iraq War in 2003 has already been investigated from different perspectives. In this section, the following main approaches to analyzing the Iraq War discord between the United States and Germany are outlined: contrary inter-textual relations; tactical maneuvers by the German Chancellor to succeed in his re-election campaign; political, strategic, and cultural differences between the transatlantic partners; and the demonstration of a new assertiveness by a united Germany.

a. Explanations on the Individual Level

In a first level analysis, Erik Ringmar used the narrative type approach (romance, tragedy, comedy, and satire) and concluded that “the disagreements ... have their origin in the incommensurability of narrative types.”⁷ According to Ringmar’s study, George W. Bush was a romantic embarking on an

⁵ Robert A. Isaak, “The Individual in International Politics: Solving the Level-of-Analysis Problem,” *Polity* 7, no. 2 (Winter, 1974), 264.

⁶ Stephen M. Walt, “The Relationship between Theory and Policy in International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 8, (2005), 38.

⁷ Erik Ringmar, “Inter-Textual Relations: The Quarrel Over the Iraq War as a Conflict between Narrative Types,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 41, no. 4 (December, 2006), 404.

inevitable mission to spread freedom as the “chosen one” against the evil dictator, Saddam Hussein. As one of the representatives of the “old Europeans,” Gerhard Schröder enacted a comic narrative following reform-minded policies and favoring decisions via the gradual spread of institutions, notably the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). From this perspective, the clash of narratives was not surprising, but wholly predictable.

The re-election campaign of Gerhard Schröder in 2002 is also a common explanation for the refusal of any German participation in the Iraq War. Two months prior to the election, the incumbent chancellor was 8 to 10 percent behind his contender. In the course of a natural disaster (the extraordinary floods in Brandenburg, Sachsen-Anhalt and Sachsen), he reduced this gap down to 4 percent and acquired a new impulse for the last phase of the campaign. At the same time, the Bush Administration announced that it was ready for a unilateral preemptive military attack against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. According to polls, the vast majority of Germans was strictly against the war. In the last phase of the election campaign, the prospective Iraq War became a major issue in German domestic politics. According to Martin Walker, “There was a clear element of political calculation in Schröder’s increasingly critical remarks of the Bush administration’s policies, spurred by his political advisors who argued that he could win votes from eastern Germany.”⁸

b. Political, Strategic, and Cultural Aspects

Other observers have used second level analyses to explain the origins of the U.S.-German discord. Some have focused, for example, on national differences, in the respective political and strategic cultures, regarding the use of force. On one hand, the United States has a long history of more or less successful use of military force and the resolution of conflicts. This generalization applies to the period prior to the Cold War as well as to the bipolar

⁸ Martin Walker, “The Winter of Germany’s Discontent,” *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 4 (Winter, 2002), 38.

era, and it continues to the present day. On the other hand, Germany, one of the instigators of both world wars, has subsequently rejected the use of force on a unilateral basis, or on the basis of power politics with echoes from the 19th century. For the Federal Republic of Germany, from its entry into NATO in 1955 to the early 1990s, the only exception was a possible allied defense against an external threat. One could argue that the Federal Republic of Germany had become pacifistic, and therefore, opposed any participation in a second Gulf War. The engagements of the German military in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and Afghanistan since late 2001 refute this argument. However, there is a domestic cleavage between two major camps regarding the use of force that continues to shape German strategic culture:⁹ the left has generally followed a pacifist interpretation of the post-World War II era (“never again war”), while the right-of-center has instead interpreted the role of the German military in a multilateral way (“never again alone”). The nascent U.S. pre-emptive approach of waging wars, after 11 September 2001, challenged both political camps. As Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen has observed, “Pre-emptive strikes against potential future threats carried out by coalitions of the willing did not sit well with either school of thought within Germany’s security culture.”¹⁰

The German “no” to the Iraq War that burdened the U.S.-German relationship can also be explained by a deep-rooted anti-Americanism in Europe in general, and in Germany in particular. Some analysts hold that many Europeans, especially the left and far right elites in Western Europe, tend to define a European identity in opposition to America.¹¹ The German government in 2002 and 2003 consisted of a left-of-center coalition. As a consequence, one might argue that the opposition to the Iraq War was a sort of open declaration of this fundamental ideological and political tension.

⁹ Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, “The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism and Pre-Emptive Strikes,” *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 3 (September, 2005), 344.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 351.

¹¹ Andrei S. Markovits, *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Another reason for the quarrel between the United States and Germany is the fact that Germany, the government, and its population, after the reunification in 1990, had become an emancipated state after the semi-sovereignty of the era 1945-1991, with a higher level of assertiveness about its role in international politics. From this perspective, Germany was simply not convinced that a war was the appropriate way to deal with the problems in Iraq and the Middle East and questioned whether such a policy was consistent with international law. According to Tuomas Forsberg, the decision to refrain from war was “eased by the deep public mistrust of U.S. foreign policy within the country, but it reflected more a dislike of the Bush administration and was directed towards a particular aspect of its policies rather than being a wholesale rejection of a partnership with the United States.”¹² Germany, by that time, was not willing to be only a part of the West, but granted its new weight in a united Europe, sought to shape the West. Forsberg argues, furthermore, that the real question in the U.S.-German relationship was “the nature of the world order and the USA’s relation to its allies, no longer the single issue of Iraq.”¹³

3. Current Scholarly Approaches: Pros and Cons

The above explanations of Germany’s refusal to participate in the Iraq war in 2003 are all, to a certain extent, valid. The United States and Germany had different political and strategic evaluations of the necessity of a military engagement in Iraq. These political differences on such a crucial issue posed a severe challenge for both transatlantic partners. However, some of the explanations of the origins of the discord in 2002-2003 are unpersuasive because Germany, under Schröder in some cases, (e.g., Kosovo) cooperated with the United States regarding the use of force, while in the case of the Iraq War it did not. This fact belies the belief, for instance, among U.S. neo-

¹² Tuomas Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq: Anti-Americanism, Pacifism Or Emancipation?" *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 2 (June, 2005), 214.

¹³ Ibid., 226.

conservatives that Germans are pie-eyed pacifists in the caricature that has operated with such force on this side of the Atlantic.

Anti-Americanism, as a feature of the political culture in Germany, might have played a role, but it does not explain why after 9/11, Germany expressed “unconditional solidarity” with the United States and additionally supported the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and even granted overflight rights in 2001. Furthermore, as indicated above, the German opposition was focused on the Bush Administration, rather than on the American nation.

The argument of a cultural clash, in terms of a left-right cleavage regarding the use of military force within the German elites is valid, but it does not explain why Chancellor Schröder used all his political power (in a vote of confidence) to break the pacifistic resistance in his governing coalition in the case of the former Yugoslavia, and yet did not do so in the Iraq war.

It is paramount to raise the question why Germany did not participate in the Iraq War and, further, why the United States shifted its strategy toward pre-emptive military engagements, since the Iraq War was the trigger of the discord. Moreover, the question should be answered, why did both political leaders keep opposing each other? For instance, after saying “no” to the Iraq War, Germany did not return to business as usual, but spent its efforts on building a coalition against the war with the aid of France and Russia. The American political leaders, on the other hand, unlike most of their regular diplomatic corps, started to divide Europe rhetorically into “old” and “new” parts and avoided any personal contact with the German government. “Germany has been a problem, and France has been a problem ... But you look at vast numbers of other countries in Europe. They're not with France and Germany on this, they're with the United States. Germany and France represent ‘old Europe,’ and NATO's expansion in recent years means ‘the center of gravity is shifting to the east,’”¹⁴ Rumsfeld said

¹⁴ “Rumsfeld: France, Germany are ‘problems’ in Iraqi conflict,” CNN.COM, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/22/sprj.iq.wrap> (accessed November 27, 2007).

in a statement of extraordinary power and of dubious merit. The behavior of both George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder cannot be explained adequately by the analytical approaches reviewed above.

The only one of these approaches that might explain the contrary notions of the Iraq war and the subsequent diplomatic crisis is the proposed categorization of narrative types on the individual level. Yet, the basis for the categorization, set forth by Erik Ringmar, is not detailed and seems rather arbitrary.

D. METHODOLOGY

In view of the limitations and weaknesses of the predominant current explanations, a detailed analysis of the operational codes of the two protagonists, George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder, might fill these gaps. Here the analysis pays a debt to the late Alexander George,¹⁵ whose path-breaking work on Woodrow Wilson in the 1950s retains great merit for its suggestive power to illuminate the nature of statecraft through the biography of statesmen. Such an approach is especially suggestive in the present case. In the case of the force and statecraft of 2002-2003, the questions that have to be answered are: To what extent did the personal relationship between Bush and Schröder shape U.S.-German discord over Iraq in 2002-2003? How significant was this personal relationship in comparison to other determining factors of policy and strategy as well as the impact of domestic politics on international relations?

This thesis further follows the approach of John Lamberton Harper,¹⁶ who drew a detailed picture of three Americans whose views shaped U.S. policy toward Europe in World War II and its aftermath. Using a biographical method,

¹⁵ Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*, New Impression edition (New York: Dover Publications, 1964).

¹⁶ John L. Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (New York,: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Harper analyzed how personal experiences and biases significantly influenced the conceptions and the decisions of these statesmen, and in consequence, American policy regarding Europe.

To produce a reasonably comprehensive picture of the relevant features of George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder, material has been gathered from biographies, autobiographies, interviews, and other documents that make possible an analysis of these two statesmen's views. The latter sources explicitly include documents written by former professional colleagues. In the segment of the thesis that considers the period in office as head of government, most sources consist of academic journals and newspaper articles. The main emphasis is placed on the aspects of policy that are related to the transatlantic relationship. In the last chapter, the prelude to the Iraq War in 2002-2003 is discussed against the background of the previous chapters.

The thesis concludes that the U.S. – German relationship in the 2002-2003 Iraq crises was critically influenced by the personal relationship between U.S. President George W. Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Any analysis of this crisis, that somehow gives short shrift to this vital factor of personality in statecraft, is surely incomplete at best.

II. PERSONAL BIAS: TRANSATLANTIC EXPERIENCES ON THE WAY TO OFFICE

A. GEORGE W. BUSH

1. Decisive Roots in Texas

George Walker Bush was born on 6 July 1946 in New Haven, Connecticut and grew up as the oldest of six siblings. As his family moved to West Texas when he was a two-year old child, his youth was significantly influenced by the way of life in Midland, Texas – a place known for the rough-and-ready style of the oil business, versus the New England finesse of Connecticut and the Ivy League that characterized the biography of his father and others in his family. One hardly need mention that West Texas is far from the Atlantic realm of statecraft, to say nothing of the mentality and mores of a man like Dean Acheson or George Kennan. West Texas is also far from Lower Saxony in West Germany and the milieu of the “Jungsozialisten” in the 1970s that loomed so large in the character of the other protagonist in this story. The oil lands adjacent to Mexico brought the younger Bush none of the acculturation in European affairs that had been obligatory for an earlier generation of men who aspired to power in American life.

In his later years, when he studied or worked in the Northeast United States (with its Atlantic orientation), Texas remained a kind of haven for him. Even as president of the United States since 2001, he has spent most of his leisure time on his ranch in Crawford, Texas. George W. Bush summarized the way of life in Midland as follows: “Midland was a small town, with small-town values. We learned to respect our elders, to do what they said, and to be good neighbors. We went to church. Families spent time together.”¹⁷ He led a typical, sheltered small-town life in a conservative family and community. In his

¹⁷ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001), 18.

autobiography and in numerous interviews, Bush emphasized his experience in Midland, Texas: "I would say people, if they want to understand me, need to understand Midland and the attitude of Midland."¹⁸

One might ask, what are the characteristics of someone coming from Midland, Texas? Andrew Card, a confidant and campaigner for the Bush family since the 1980 New Hampshire Republican primary, described the future Governor of Texas and President of the United States as someone who matured in the course of time, but simultaneously has never given up his Texas roots. "He's a tell-it-like-it-is person. He does not pick his words to obfuscate. He is from the rough-and-tumble world of Midland, Texas. Your word means more than the contract here. In Midland, when you shake hands, that means more than your signature on the contract."¹⁹

After the family's move to Houston, and attending a private school for 8th and 9th grade, George W. Bush was set on his father's track to the power elite in the United States in the second half of the 20th century: the elite prep school and the Ivy League University. At the age of fifteen, he attended a boarding school, the University preparatory school in Andover, Massachusetts. He was supposed to enroll in a university with the best reputation afterwards. Unlike his father, however, George W. Bush had difficulties catching up with his classmates and had to spend more effort to meet the intellectual standards. After Bush graduated from Andover, the dean tried to talk him out of attending Yale University, since he was not convinced that Bush's capabilities would be good enough to make his way at this particular university.²⁰

The experience at Andover was not only challenging in academic terms, but also by its distance from the Bush family in Texas. In those years, George W.

¹⁸ Russel Cobb, "A Long Four Years in Midland," <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20041108/cobb> (accessed February 29, 2008).

¹⁹ Ronald Kessler, *A Matter of Character – Inside The White House of George W. Bush* (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), 6.

²⁰ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001), 22.

Bush compensated for his family's absence with numerous acquaintances on the campus. His open personality and his straightforward way of addressing people made it easy for him to get in contact with others, and he started to build up a personal network. "Within months of his arrival, Bush was seen as a campus mover, not on the strength of his intellect or his athletic achievements, but by sheer force of personality. Bush was nicknamed 'Lip' because he had an opinion on everything – and sometimes a tongue sharper than necessary."²¹ Despite the challenging standards that had to be met at Andover, he graduated and eventually enrolled at Yale University.

In September 1964 (as the Vietnam War began in earnest for the U.S.), he started to study history at Yale University, where previously his father and grandfather had graduated. Besides the academic commitments, the social activities and networking of fraternity life were important aspects during his time at the university. In a commencement speech in 2001 at Yale University, he described his personal "take-away" from this institution as follows: "I studied hard, I played hard, and I made a lot of lifelong friends. What stays ... is the part of ... education you hardly ever notice at the time. It's the expectations and examples around you, the ideals you believe in, and the friends you make."²² Especially in the latter aspect, he was an exceptionally active student. He became the captain of the football team, the president of the fraternity "Delta Kappa Epsilon," and a member of the Skull and Bones society, an elite fraternity. This demonstrated not only his social commitments, but also his popularity and his fellow students' willingness to make him an important figure in their community.

After his reserve military service (as a pilot of USAF 2d line F102s far from the skies of Vietnam), and some occasional vocations, including assistance in his

²¹ George Lardner Jr. and Lois Romano, "At Height of Vietnam, Bush Picks Guard," *Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., Jul 28, 1999, A-1.

²² George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President in Commencement Address Yale University New Haven," May 21, 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/05/20010521-2.html> (accessed February 18, 2008).

father's political campaigns, in 1973 he decided to pursue a master's degree at Harvard Business School, yet another foundation stone in the structure of U.S. power and achievement in state, economy and society. George W. Bush described the studies at Harvard as a turning point in his life and as an experience that influenced his thinking on economics and capitalism. "Business school was a turning point for me. ... I had dabbled in many things, but I had no real idea what I wanted to do with the rest of my life when I arrived at Harvard Business School. ... Harvard gave me the tools and the vocabulary of the business world."²³ This high-level education prepared him for further attempts to succeed in business and had its culmination when he became a member of the management board of a baseball team, the Texas Rangers. Bush gained his own Texan identity and name recognition, in his own right, and separated himself from his father's legacy.²⁴ In other words, he left his father's vocational track for the first time and evolved his own foundation for a future career.

The year 1985 was yet another turning point in his life. He decided to completely quit drinking alcohol and to renew his Christian faith, which determined his future life.²⁵ Since that time, he has continuously and publicly reflected on religious questions. For instance, he said, "I could not be governor if I did not believe in a divine plan that supersedes all human plans."²⁶

2. Son of the 41st President of the United States

George W. Bush has claimed numerous times that he had reaped no advantages from the fact that he was the son of the 41st President of the United States, since his father did not become president until 1989. However, George

²³ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001), 60.

²⁴ Robert Draper, *Dead Certain – The Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 43.

²⁵ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001), 132 – 136.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

H.W. Bush had already made a bright career prior to becoming the President of the United States in such positions as Ambassador to the United Nations, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Ambassador to China, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Vice President of the United States for two terms. In the course of this pre-presidential career, George H.W. Bush had been building up a huge network of social contacts comprised of influential people in the United States. It can be assumed that at one or another moment of George W. Bush's life, his father's links might have helped to benefit him or that at least the family's name had a positive influence.

The number of published allegations on benefits from his father is substantial. It would be unfair, however, to argue that George W. Bush is simply a product of George H. W. Bush's connections, since he eventually met all the necessary requirements and built up his own social networks and businesses.

3. Governor of Texas

While listening to the radio in Dallas, George W. Bush heard Ann Richards, the incumbent Governor of Texas (D) in 1993, declaring that she had no idea how to solve the state's financial school problems. "It occurred to Bush – and to Karl Rove, [his future political aide] – that he had better figure out what to tell Texas voters about *his* Vision Thing."²⁷ This was the start of Bush's new career as a politician, and he overcame his earlier halfhearted attempts at success in the world of the power elite. He succeeded in gathering experts around him and convincing the electorate of his vision and his ability to lead.

²⁷ Robert Draper, *Dead Certain – The Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 44; emphasis in the original.

On 8 November 1994, George W. Bush was elected Governor of Texas. According to the White House biography, he became the first Governor in Texas history to be elected to consecutive 4-year terms when he was re-elected on 3 November 1998.²⁸

The crucial force for becoming politically active was George W. Bush's deep-rooted criticism of the perceived decline of moral values in politics and of his opponent's apparent lack of vision. He could not understand what he saw as the missing "vision" of Ann Richards, then the Governor of Texas. He also criticized political leaders on the national level, such as President Bill Clinton, an enterprise in which he was hardly alone in the early and mid-1990s. In a polemical way, he constantly referred to Democrats in office as lacking integrity. "Over and over, he [George W. Bush] referred to his desire to restore dignity to the office, a thinly veiled reference to Clinton's escapades with Monica Lewinsky and to other ethical and moral lapses of the Clinton administration."²⁹ This strict stance against the perceived erosion of values endured in the following years.

4. George W. Bush's Style of Leadership

As Governor of Texas, George W. Bush used a specific style of leadership, which concentrated his individual influence on the strategic decision-making level rather than on "micromanagement." One reason for this approach was his deficit in political experience, which had to be covered by the experts working for his office. Another factor was his vision of the actual role of a governor. He preferred to be a leader who gave general directives while articulating visions in different areas of policy. His staff was subsequently charged with conducting the day-to-day work, which made the nomination of the staff a crucial part of his leadership.

²⁸ White House, Biography of George W. Bush, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/president/biography.html> (accessed January 30, 2008).

²⁹ Ronald Kessler, *A Matter of Character – Inside The White House of George W. Bush* (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), 75.

I put a lot of faith and trust in my staff. I look for people who are smart and loyal and who share my conservative philosophy. My job is to set the agenda and tone and framework, to lay out the principles by which we operate and make decisions, and then delegate much of the process to them. The final decision often rests with me, but their judgment has a big influence.³⁰

His style of leadership, in terms of a high level of delegation, did not change in his later career.

Since he focused strictly on visions and principles, it is necessary to determine these super-ordinate drivers for his decision-making process and style of leadership. Carolyn Thompson and James Ware comprehensively analyzed George W. Bush's character and his leadership. Although some of the conclusions of the authors might call for criticism, the personal analysis is sound. "The list of Bush's personal values is extensive: accountability, cooperation, freedom, fun, and others. At the top of the list, though, are three in particular. ... Bush's three personal core values are: 1. Family ..., 2. Faith (belief in God), [and] 3. Integrity (which, when intact, provides for dignity)."³¹ These values determined not only his personal behavior, but also the way he set his political agenda. His campaigns for governor and president reflected these ideals, and could be seen in his "compassionate conservatism" campaign in 2000.

Besides his basic style of leadership, the way he leads his staff, and how he assigns responsibilities to his staff, deserve additional attention. Thompson and Ware dedicated two out of ten chapters on this particular aspect of leadership. "Not only does Bush have the courage to hire experts who are smarter than he is on various topics, but he also has the common sense and discipline to leave them alone to do their jobs. ... They understand that their job

³⁰ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001), 103.

³¹ Carolyn B. Thompson and James W. Ware, *The Leadership Genius of George W. Bush – 10 Commonsense Lessons From the Commander in Chief* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 8.

is to do their job.”³² The “leave them alone” approach certainly motivates his staff members and ensures that people with the highest level of expertise handle complex issues. In this context, it is decisive as to which extent a close or loose leadership style is applied. On one hand, too close a leadership style may result in getting lost in micromanagement; conversely, a loose leadership style may imply the risk of losing control. Accordingly, George W. Bush had to be aware of the risks of his leadership style at all times. No evidence could be found that he ever lost control during his duty as governor.

His decision to campaign for governor was a complete change in his career and did not follow a calculated course to gain political power, since he actually had no previous political career. This observation is consistent with his personal perception. “I’ve never plotted the various steps of my life, certainly never campaigned for one office to try to position myself for the next. I am more spontaneous than that. I live in the moment, seize opportunities, and try to make the most of them.”³³

5. Campaigning for the White House in Washington, 1999-2000

Already in his inauguration speech as Governor of Texas, George W. Bush stated his strong conservative conviction on how to govern, in comparison to liberal ideas. “Some people think it’s inappropriate to make moral judgments anymore. Not me. ... Because for our children to have the kind of life we want for them, they must learn to say yes to responsibility, yes to family, yes to honesty and work ... and not to drugs, no to violence, no to promiscuity or having babies out of wedlock.”³⁴ Consequently, his campaign for president, which was once

³² Carolyn B. Thompson and James W. Ware, *The Leadership Genius of George W. Bush – 10 Commonsense Lessons From the Commander in Chief* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 114.

³³ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001), 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

more managed by his longtime aides, Karen Hughes and Karl Rove, followed the general idea of “compassionate conservatism.”

The term “compassionate conservatism” referred to the conservative mindset of the Republicans as it had evolved since the mid-1960s, but also embraced the idea of aiding the disadvantaged. This compassionate theme was a continuation of a decisive component of George W. Bush’s previous campaigns, in which he stressed education for all of Texas’s youth, thereby enhancing vocational opportunities.

One might allege that Bush chose this emphasis in a soberly calculated way to convince a wider range of voters to support him. His commitments and success in the “No Child Left Behind” education policy as Governor of Texas, however, already demonstrated his idealistic attitude. After verifying whether Bush only made “lip-service” or actually took action in his personal stance, the former soldier and political figure Colin Powell “approved of what he learned about Bush’s governorship. ‘To me,’ he told cheering delegates at the convention [the Republican nominating convention on 31 July 2000], compassionate conservatism was ‘just caring about people.’”³⁵

The campaign’s focus on conservative values and “faith-based initiatives” would become one of the main themes in the primaries, but this would not be enough to prevail in the election. Karen Hughes, who had already advised Bush in his campaign in Texas, knew that a focus on education had proved to be promising. However, on the national level, this issue would not work the same way, since education was mostly managed on the state level. Finally, “Bush’s third belief, in tax cuts, held promise. It would provide the rationale.”³⁶ George W. Bush personally brought in an additional topic; he wanted to make defense an issue and he looked beyond the military transformation requirement of his own presidency. In company with his pre-election advisors in political affairs, the

³⁵ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier – The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 293.

³⁶ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 7.

“Vulcans,” he developed a vision of the future U.S. military. The “Vulcans” was a self-imposed nickname for a group of conservative intellectuals and former officials in previous, conservative administrations such as Richard (Dick) Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Armitage.³⁷ “The word, Vulcans, captured perfectly the image the Bush foreign policy team sought to convey, a sense of power, toughness, resilience and durability.”³⁸ George W. Bush made the ideas of a new U.S. military public at The Citadel on 23 September 1999. “I will defend the American people against missiles and terror’ ... ‘And I will begin creating the military of the next century. ... Even if I am elected, I will not command the new military we create. That will be left to a president who comes after me.”³⁹ This statement is ironic in light of the events of the subsequent decade, especially when one considers the fate of so called “force transformation” and the mixed fortunes of U.S. arms in multiple theaters of conflict since 2001.

Except for George W. Bush’s support for the transformation of the military, which had at least indirect implications for international relations, the above policy areas were mostly focused on domestic issues. However, George W. Bush had already expressed general ideas about U.S. foreign policy under his presidency, reflecting the unique role of the United States in the world, and its national interests, and stressing his personal position regarding U.S. foreign policy. In a presidential debate with Al Gore, the vice president and Democratic nominee, on 12 October 2000 he stated:

Peace in the Middle East is in our nation's interests. Having a hemisphere that is free for trade and peaceful is in our nation's interests. Strong relations in Europe is in our nation's interests. I've thought a lot about what it means to be the President. I also understand an administration is not one person but an administration is [composed of] dedicated citizens who are called

³⁷ James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans – The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin Group, 2004).

³⁸ Ibid., X.

³⁹ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 8.

by the President to serve the country, to serve a cause greater than self. And so I've thought about an administration of people who represent all America, but people who understand my compassionate and conservative philosophy.⁴⁰

In the same interview, he hinted that he had a critical standpoint toward nation building operations and called for a rather “humble foreign policy.” In November 2000, George W. Bush won the election for the presidency against the Democrat Al Gore, who had served as Vice-President under President Bill Clinton.

6. Germany, One European State among Others

George W. Bush's life and his political career as Governor of Texas was focused on domestic issues. His provincial-minded attitude could be observed, for instance, in a conversation with a journalist when, as Governor of Texas, he replied to a question about the “civil union” law upheld by the Vermont Supreme Court: “I haven't heard anything about it. I'd only be interested if it were an issue in Texas.”⁴¹

This provincial attitude did not change until he decided to run for president in 1997. Urged and at the same time supported by his father, he had to “learn” about foreign affairs on the theoretical level, not driven by personal interest and involvement over a longer period of time. In 1998, George H.W. Bush convinced Condoleezza Rice, the provost of Stanford University and a former member of the National Security Council staff during the senior Bush administration during the epoch of German unification, to conduct a series of policy seminars for his son in order to deepen his knowledge of foreign affairs.⁴² It can be assumed that these “classes of international relations” concentrated on the hot spots of global

⁴⁰ George W. Bush, “Online Newshour – Presidential Debate,” October 12, 2000, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec00/for-policy_10-12.html (accessed May 13, 2008).

⁴¹ Gail Sheehy, “The Accidental Candidate,” *Vanity Fair*, <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2000/10/bush200010> (accessed February 10, 2008).

⁴² Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 5.

policy with direct relevance to the United States. Despite the fact that Condoleezza Rice is the co-author of a noteworthy book on the 1989-1990 German reunification process,⁴³ it is possible that the relations between the United States and Germany played a small role in George W. Bush's perspective.

Statecraft between Bonn/Berlin and Washington may have played no role at all in Rice's tutorials of the younger Bush, given that the unification of Germany had unfolded so effectively years before. Also, none of the contemporary fears in leading circles in Washington about a "Fourth Reich" in the year 1990 had a kernel of truth to them. Further, in the attempt of the son to set himself apart from the record of the luminary father, one can guess that a desire to make his name in some other geographical area, by some other means of statecraft, may have played a role in the operational code of this political figure. In his campaign autobiography, *A Charge to Keep*, Germany is not mentioned at all and even foreign affairs are only addressed twice, each time in the context of free trade.⁴⁴

Since George W. Bush earned a bachelor's degree in history with an emphasis on American and European history from Yale University in 1968, one might speculate that he had at least a reasonable knowledge of European history until the 1960s and that his basic views on Germany evolved during his time at Yale.⁴⁵ Regarding the Federal German-American relationship between the end of World War II and his graduation date, there was a strong pro-American stance in the conservative governments of the Federal Republic of Germany. The first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer (1949-1963), and his successors, Ludwig Erhard and Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1963-1969), were aware of the importance of the transatlantic ally in terms of political stability,

⁴³ Philip Selikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁴⁴ George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep – My Journey to the White House* (New York: First Perennial, 2001).

⁴⁵ Ibid., 46.

European security and economic prosperity. Bush had never visited Germany before his first official visit as President of the United States in 2002, and he had no previous personal experiences in Germany. It is plain, however, that a divergence in life experiences set him apart from the other protagonist in this account, Gerhard Schröder.

B. GERHARD SCHRÖDER

Gerhard Schröder began his 2006 autobiographical review of his decisions as leader of the German government with impressions of his youth.⁴⁶ His early experiences of poverty and perceived personal disadvantages characterized his growing up and his life as an adult.

1. Leaving Humble Conditions Behind

Gerhard Fritz Kurt Schröder's youth was characterized by the imperative to jump at rising opportunities to ensure his survival and that of his family in Lower Saxony. Shortly after his birth in 1944, his father died during World War II and left behind a wife with two children that had to live on social welfare and, occasionally, unskilled labor by his mother. As Gerhard Schröder put it, "'social justice' could 'not be separated from his biography', but 'against the personal background' of his career, he evolved a 'very pragmatic relationship to reality and to the opportunities to change them.'"⁴⁷ This attitude might describe Schröder's high level of ambition and willpower.

Although he graduated from lower secondary school successfully, there was no consideration given to attending high school (Gymnasium) for someone with his social roots and lack of sufficient financial means. Instead of continuing his formal education, he was trained and afterwards worked as a common retailer in a hardware store in Lower Saxony. A few years later, he decided to

⁴⁶ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 15-28.

⁴⁷ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 8.

pursue a higher level of education in addition to his fulltime job. He subsequently attained university entrance qualifications in 1966 and studied law. He finished his academic studies in 1976 and was awarded his license to practice.

In 1978, he established a lawyer's office in Hannover, Lower Saxony, and worked as a lawyer until 1990. In his occupation, he underlined that he was not willing to work in an ordinary way. He focused on spectacular cases such as defending environmental activists, gay priests and terrorists of the Red Army Faction (RAF), with a huge resonance in the media and the leaders of the SPD.⁴⁸ The RAF cases caused a tremendous echo in the media and created the risk of being associated with terrorists. Whether his vocational activities were the result of his sense of justice, as he suggests in his autobiography, or influenced by his tendency to jump at opportunities, cannot be answered conclusively. However, in the period 1978-1980, his political career attained extraordinary momentum, and his popularity was unquestionably spurred by his peculiar activities as a lawyer.

Unlike the vast majority of graduates from lower secondary school at that time, Gerhard Schröder was driven by the strong will to become successful through education and to leave the humble social conditions of his early youth far behind. Schröder described his personal motivation at that time as follows: "I want to get out of there."⁴⁹ His early professional life shows quite clearly that he aspired not only to moderate success, but also to social acceptance and popularity. In order to achieve this, Gerhard Schröder cleverly took his own personal, sometimes even risky way, and was not afraid of challenging both the establishment of his own party and the right-of-center oriented media.

⁴⁸ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 35-36.

⁴⁹ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 26.

2. Starting a Political Career - Activist in the Left Movement

In the fall of 1963, as a student, Gerhard Schröder joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany, primarily because it would allow someone like him to participate in education and society.⁵⁰ Furthermore, his decision to become an active member of the SPD was strongly influenced by his admiration for Helmut Schmidt, an impressive speaker, decision-maker and political actor rather than a theorist in political affairs, who had managed a severe flood catastrophe as Federal Minister of the Interior in the city-state of Hamburg in 1962.⁵¹ According to the party rules, because he was less than thirty-five years old, Schröder was automatically a member of the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the “Jusos.”

The ideas of politically-oriented young people in the 1960s and 1970s, especially students at the German universities, were expressed by protests against the conservative establishment in general, public rejection of attempts to implement an emergency law in the constitution, and demonstrations against the U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam. The protests eventually even created a left-wing extra-parliamentary opposition group, and a terrorist group, the RAF. Additionally, these influences spread into the leftist parties in Germany. Extreme-left activities increased in communist-related parties, and the youth organization of the SPD, the “Jusos,” registered an increased number of such tendencies as well. Since Willy Brandt, a member of the SPD, was head of the government from 1969 until 1974, the Social Democrats had to face not only the opposition of the conservatives in parliament, but also both left-wing extra-parliamentary opposition, and resistance within their own party. These extreme left-wing tendencies, in the youth organization of the SPD, severely challenged the development of the SPD from a Marxist-oriented party toward a moderate one,

⁵⁰ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 26.

⁵¹ Ibid., 28.

which was manifested in the Bad Godesberg Program in 1959. Gerhard Schröder became an important protagonist in the party during this period of political change.

His first significant appointment on the federal level was as leader of the youth organization of the SPD of Germany from 1978 to 1980, and his most important task was to bring the moderate SPD and the socialist youth organization back together. It is noteworthy that he had already been leader of the same organization on the state level in Lower Saxony from 1969 to 1970. On his way to becoming federal leader of the “Jusos,” Gerhard Schröder demonstrated that he aspired to higher things, and at the same time displayed his “make-or-break” attitude, which he underlined frequently in his later career. Prior to his appointment as leader in 1978, he had been asked several times to become a member of the federal board of the “Jusos,” but he always refused, asserting that he was only available for the leading position.⁵²

It would be incorrect to assume that Schröder was an advocate of the party’s establishment. Actually, he represented the extreme left wing within the SPD; years later it turned out that he stood for rather moderate policies and, therefore, it could be assumed that from his perspective, the position as leader of the youth organization probably was only an appropriate step for a political career in the SPD. Although he represented the challenging wing of the party, his success in uniting the party was rewarded by an offer to set him in a promising place on the party-list in order to become a Member of Parliament. In the event, Schröder was not dependent on the party-list, since he won his electoral district, Hannover Land, and, therefore, got a direct mandate to the Bundestag, the German Parliament, in 1980.⁵³

⁵² Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 36.

⁵³ Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, <http://text.spd.de/servlet/PB/menu/1019338/index.html> (accessed January 31, 08).

Since Gerhard Schroeder was a backbencher, he soon realized that his influence on day-to-day politics on the national level was limited. To improve his personal standing in the party and his potential for a successful political career, he kept the regional aspects of Lower Saxony in focus. “He knew: If he wished to become a successful politician on the national level, he first had to make his way in his home state. He had to become State Governor of Lower Saxony.”⁵⁴

Gerhard Schröder’s priorities, especially as leader of the “Jusos,” were presumably influenced by his instinct for opportunities and his assessment of expected positive impacts on his career. In this context, Gerhard Schröder stated his thinking as follows: “A political party is not solely about politics in the narrow sense, it is also about careers. A political appointment is not exclusively a service for the whole of society, but also a sort of recognition of the power of personal interest, and the fulfillment of vanity. It would be nonsense to deny that.”⁵⁵

In pursuit of success, his focus was clearly on the regional level of Lower Saxony. The national level could only be a second step, and it can be assumed that international politics played an inferior role for Schröder at that time. However, a strong opposition to capitalism, which was, from a left-wing perspective, represented by the United States, as well as protests against the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, determined attitudes to the United States in Schröder’s left-wing youth branch of the SPD.

3. State Governor in Lower Saxony

a. The Path into Office

In 1983, Gerhard Schröder gained political influence as elected leader of the SPD district of Hannover, the largest district in Lower Saxony. From his personal perspective, this was an excellent position to become the top

⁵⁴ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 63.

⁵⁵ Jürgen Hogrefe, *Gerhard Schröder – Ein Portrait* (München: Siedler, 2002), 149.

candidate for the SPD in the upcoming race for State Governor of Lower Saxony. Since the former candidate of the SPD had resigned, Schröder regarded himself as the appropriate successor.

Against the strategy of the party leaders on the state level, and the common practice of the SPD (i.e., letting the national party headquarters in Bonn choose the candidate after confidential discussions), Schröder did not wait for the announcement of an alternative candidate, but actively used the media to assert his claim for the upcoming campaign. SPD leaders were outraged about the misbehavior of the less favored “leftie” from Hannover and nominated two rival candidates in order to prevent Schröder from gaining even more power.⁵⁶ In this situation, Gerhard Schröder demonstrated his remarkable skills to build political alliances, to convince undecided political figures of the SPD, and to inspire the common members of the party. Finally, in a crucial vote at the state party congress, he asserted himself with overwhelming endorsements and became the top candidate for the elections in Lower Saxony in 1986. Despite his personal success, his self-centered behavior led to distinct skepticism and to a kind of mistrust within the SPD, especially on the federal level.

In the election campaign, Schröder focused on a coalition with the recently established party of the Greens that had been part of the state parliament since 1982, in order to increase his chances against the conservative incumbent of the CDU, Ernst Albrecht. This would have been the first time that the Greens became a partner of a government coalition. Schröder stated, “The cooperation of the SPD and the Greens is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The idea is to enable an alliance of employees and educated middle class to engage in politics. This seems to be the only appropriate one, to resolve the problems of the last twenty years of the 20th century.”⁵⁷ A short time later, again

⁵⁶ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 66.

⁵⁷ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 72.

using the media to create facts in public, he completely turned his back on this idea, which hardened the common allegation of Schröder's opportunism.

Eventually, Schröder lost the elections. Even his instrumentalization of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe, in accordance with popular desires to abolish nuclear power, could not change the result. However, the final phase of his campaign demonstrated, for the first time, his ability to exploit suddenly arising topics to his own advantage.

Four years later, in 1990, he dared a second attempt for office. Schröder succeeded in the election by conducting a media-focused campaign, which was based on his popular personality rather than on real political issues. He later admitted that his campaign had more to do with show than policies.⁵⁸

b. Gerhard Schröder as State Governor in Lower Saxony

As State Governor of Lower Saxony, Schröder led a coalition consisting of the SPD and the Greens, a so-called red-green coalition, a first for the Federal Republic of Germany for a full four-year term. Skillful, he understood how to keep the Greens aligned, even in situations in which the coalition partner had to make allowances in key interest areas. In retrospect, he described his relationship to the Greens as follows: "In this way, Lower Saxony was thoroughly a testing ground, on which the resilience of a possible red-green coalition on the federal level had been tried out."⁵⁹ From the SPD perspective, the coalition was much more successful than in the eyes of the Greens. A poll, in the summer of 1992, published a satisfaction rate of 73 percent among the Social Democrats, but only 60 percent within the Green Party.⁶⁰ This underlined the fact that the Greens had to compromise more than the SPD with its dominating State Governor.

⁵⁸ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 90.

⁵⁹ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 58.

⁶⁰ Gerhard Schröder, *Reifeprüfung: Reformpolitik am Ende des Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993), 56.

Schröder's views on economic affairs were subject to change. The former leader of the "Jusos," who had in the past called for "collectivization" and "abolishment of the current economic system," conducted a "salto capitale" ("a complete turn") and learned to utilize his close relationships with economic leaders.⁶¹ At that time, the media created the term "Genosse der Bosse," "comrade of the bosses," which reflected his completely new approach toward the economy, one that lasted through the rest of his political career.⁶² On the other hand, he demonstrated consistency in terms of having an adroit hand for high-publicity events. To prevent a hostile takeover of the companies "Continental" in 1992 and "Preussag Stahl AG" in 1998, the government of Lower Saxony successfully intervened and saved the jobs of thousands of employees.⁶³ The latter achievement indisputably spurred his election campaign for a third term as State Governor, even though his candidacy for the chancellery had already been announced. Once again, Gerhard Schröder demonstrated his outstanding capability to lead a campaign successfully.

c. *Becoming Candidate for Chancellor*

The increasing popularity of Gerhard Schröder as State Governor of Lower Saxony spurred his ambition to gain more importance on the federal level. From his perspective, the time was ripe when the incumbent chairman of the national SPD, Björn Engholm, had to resign due to a political scandal. Once more, he used the media offensively to apply as the first candidate for this position, to force his candidacy on the party by public demand. It turned out to be a miscalculation, since his approach caused a high level of reluctance within the national SPD, which favored alternative candidates such as Rudolph Scharping or Oskar Lafontaine. According to polls in 1993, there was a predominant level of public support for Schröder to become the most promising candidate as

⁶¹ Jürgen Hogrefe, *Gerhard Schröder – Ein Portrait* (München: Siedler, 2002), 182.

⁶² Elisabeth Niejahr, „Zwei Ohren für die Wirtschaft,“ 11/2002, http://www.zeit.de/2002/11/Zwei_Ohren_fuer_die_Wirtschaft (accessed February 10, 2008)

⁶³ Jürgen Hogrefe, *Gerhard Schröder – Ein Portrait* (München: Siedler, 2002), 186.

chancellor, but the party and its leadership were suspicious of him. For the first time in SPD history, instead of a decision by the party leaders, a candidate was announced and then elected, and Rudolph Scharping became the chairman of the party. He eventually ran against Helmut Kohl for chancellor in 1994.⁶⁴

In 1998, Gerhard Schröder became the official candidate for chancellor of the SPD for the national elections because polls backed the assumption that the Social Democrats, with Schröder, could oust Helmut Kohl. However, the common practice of keeping the candidacy for chancellor and the chairmanship of the party in one hand was broken. Consequently, a rivalry between the future chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, and the chairman of the party, Oskar Lafontaine, was unavoidable.

The party's decisions in 1994 and 1998 underlined Gerhard Schröder's dichotomy; he was particularly loved by the masses, but regarded with distrust by the party's establishment. Without popularity and the support of the masses, Schröder would have had tremendous problems maintaining his success and his power. At the same time, as chancellor, he would have to use this popularity in order to cope with three opponents: the parliamentary opposition, the coalition partner, and finally, his own party.

d. Foreign Affairs – International Relations

Gerhard Schröder's entire career, until 1998, was predominantly influenced by domestic politics. The World Socialists summarized his political career, in the same year on their website, by discerning a kind of provincialism. "Examining Gerhard Schröder's career as a whole, one is forced to conclude that the man ... is one whose political views and perspectives have developed in an area of activity spanning just 300 kilometres between Lemgo, Göttingen,

⁶⁴ Béla Anda et al., *Gerhard Schröder – Eine Biographie* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1996), 161.

Hannover and – for a very short period – Bonn.”⁶⁵ In this respect, his biography resembled a key feature of that of George Bush as governor of Texas.

This retrospective evaluation by the World Socialists, certainly influenced by their disappointment about the former socialist model-politician who turned into a successful mediator between business leaders and government policy-makers instead of fighting capitalism, underlines his overall regional-minded politics. Despite its general relevance, this assumption did not hold entirely true in detail. Although a State Governor has only limited possibilities to influence the nation’s foreign policies, Schröder already had at least an idea of how he would shape international relations.

From Schröder’s perspective, the use of the armed forces can scarcely be the centerpiece of a foreign policy that should engage peaceful means of statecraft and diplomacy. For instance, during the 1990-1991 Gulf War, which was supported by a vast multinational coalition against Iraq after Baghdad invaded Kuwait, Schröder was a strict opponent of the use of force against Iraq and consequently called for diplomatic solutions under the auspices of the international community.⁶⁶ It can be assumed that this stance reflected his firm conviction and was not an expression of his opportunism, because the majority of Germans and even his party supported the engagement of the coalition. His stance accorded with that of the opposition SPD of the early 1990s and reflected a long held tenet of West German statecraft since the early 1950s – to avoid all extra-Central European military adventures and entanglements.

4. Campaigning for the Chancellery in Berlin

Gerhard Schröder demonstrated once more his “make-or-break” attitude when he decided to run for chancellor in 1997. He surprised the SPD and the

⁶⁵ Wolfgang Weber, “The Social Climber - A biographical sketch of German SPD leader Gerhard Schröder,” April 08, 1998, <http://www.wsws.org/news/1998/may1998/spd-m8.shtml> (accessed February 10, 2008).

⁶⁶ Gerhard Schröder, *Reifeprüfung: Reformpolitik am Ende des Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993), 144.

public by his announcement that he would not be available for an appointment as a Federal Minister, but only as chancellor.⁶⁷ His popularity among the center of the entire electoral spectrum promised the opportunity to oust the incumbent chancellor, Helmut Kohl, after sixteen years in office. Like the two new successful heads of government in the 1990s, Tony Blair in the United Kingdom and Bill Clinton in the United States, Gerhard Schröder was reform-minded and a left-wing politician with close ties to the entrepreneurial business community and he represented the “New Center.” Schröder consequently campaigned on change in Germany and focused the campaign on his personality by contrasting it to his predecessor’s and by emphasizing his modern views, as did the other representatives of the “New Center.” The BBC News noted on the election weekend, “Germany is ripe for change. It is no longer the country of Oktoberfest and steel, but the Berlin Love Parade and software. With more than 4 million unemployed and investment flooding out of the country, it is not hard to see why many would like to see a change at the top.”⁶⁸

The American media did not see similarities between Schröder and the other protagonists of the “New Center,” since the German candidate still supported an extensive welfare state. However, CNN evaluated Schröder’s campaign at least as a successful attempt to convince the German electorate of his Blair-like personality. “Nevertheless, in a country grown stale after 16 years of Kohl, Schroeder successfully sold himself as a breath of fresh air.”⁶⁹

Besides staking a claim to modernity, Schröder also focused on important domestic issues that appealed to the voters. *Time Magazine* summarized his promises as follows: “During his 1998 campaign, Schröder promised to create

⁶⁷ Volker Herres et al., *Der Weg nach oben: Gerhard Schröder – Eine politische Biographie* (München: Econ, 1998), 36.

⁶⁸ BBC, “Schröder Grabs the Centre Ground,” September 22, 1998, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/09/98/german_elections/159674.stm (accessed April 1, 2008).

⁶⁹ CNN, “Gerhard Schroeder: Upstart at the Chancellor's Gate,” September 1998, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1998/09/germany/candidates/schroeder/> (accessed April 2, 2008).

jobs, pump up the eastern part of the country, turn the entire republic into a high-tech paradise and, tellingly, get the jobless rolls down to 3.5 million.”⁷⁰ The future international relations of the Federal Republic of Germany played only a minor role during the entire campaign in 1998 and can be summarized by Schröder’s announcement of “continuity” in German foreign policy.

5. The United States, Ruler of the World

Despite Schröder’s extreme shift toward promoting economic growth during his time as State Governor in Lower Saxony, his socialist, or at least his social democratic roots, were still distinctive. His economic approach was determined by necessary compromises on policy. In his function as State Governor, he was a member of the executive board of Volkswagen, one of the most important employers in Lower Saxony, and demonstrated his ability to mediate between labor and management in order to include all relevant interests. From his personal perspective, this understanding of the relationship between business and government is superior to pure capitalism. “The structure of our society is in many areas, as the example of Volkswagen shows, less prone to the dominance of pure speculative interests. In this aspect we stand out from the United States in a positive way.”⁷¹ Volkswagen, with its central role in the West German social market economy, represented something quite different from the free hand, laissez-faire approach to the market that one finds in the University of Chicago School of Economics and the Hoover Institution. Although Gerhard Schröder did not express direct resentments against the United States, or even anti-Americanism, his statement suggests at least a skeptical bias of what the United States stands for in terms of the unfettered nature of the market and the role of government in the political economy.

⁷⁰ Steve Zwick, “Battle Lines,” *Time Magazine*, March 31, 2002, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,221098,00.html> (accessed April 2, 2008).

⁷¹ Gerhard Schröder, *Reifeprüfung: Reformpolitik am Ende des Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993), 129.

This skeptical stance is not limited to the relationship between government and business, but also applies to the policy-making process. In 1993, he warned his party not to shift the SPD's strategy toward the example of the U.S. Democrats. He based his advice not only on historical reasons, but on his judgment that the Democrats were guided by the views of a top candidate instead by a political program, an approach that would result in an erosion of political assets within the party.⁷² In this context, he also criticized the progressive de-politization of U.S. society. Ironically, a few years later, similar assessments led to internal disputes within the party addressed to Gerhard Schröder himself, when he was chancellor and leader of the SPD (see chapter III 2b.). The above statements and assessments bring out Schröder's skeptical view of the United States and his tendency to compare German and American politics.

Schröder's bias can also be seen in other aspects of politics. Conservative governments in Washington seem to have attracted his attention. In a review, he mentioned that he recognized parallels among the conservative U.S. Presidents in the last decades. "In the mid-eighties, Ronald Reagan evoked the war of good against evil referring to the Old Testament message, whereas he of course thought of the communists as the evil ones."⁷³

These images of the United States might have caused an ambivalent view of the U.S.-German relationship during his subsequent service as chancellor. He was torn between gratefulness to the United States for providing safety and prosperity during the Cold War on one hand, and skepticism about U.S. economic arrangements on the other.

Another example of Schröder's apparent bias against conservatives in general, and U.S. conservatives in particular, is his assessment of the role of a political leader in society. He is critical of the type of political control that raises a

⁷² Gerhard Schröder, *Reifeprüfung: Reformpolitik am Ende des Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993), 209 f.

⁷³ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 50.

claim to “spiritual-moral leadership“ and expands political competences into society. Referring to Helmut Schmidt’s farewell speech in the national parliament in 1986, Schröder holds that the aspects of social life must be addressed by the society itself and not by political leaders. “Especially, this way of responsibility-imperialism causes distrust against power to a large extent.”⁷⁴

C. CONCLUSION

The careers of George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder have been different in the aspects of social origins, political and social ideologies, and indeed, world views, as well as fundamental assumptions about power in the international system of states. The former grew up in an influential family providing the best possible education as the optimal precondition for a later career. Within a vast elite social network, he benefited from financial independence and family support to move to the pinnacle of U.S. power and influence. Besides the extensive backing by his family, Bush’s personal ability to inspire other people was the decisive force for his eventual success. Until his mid-forties, he was still looking for his personal profession and finally found it in serving as Governor of Texas and later as President of the United States. His campaigns were firmly focused on domestic issues and moral values. American foreign policy played a minor role and was limited to the potential members of his cabinet, rather than his personal interests in international relations, or his personal ideas on how to shape foreign policy. In this context, the advisor group, the “Vulcans,” influenced his view on the future American role, since they were the people who taught him this area of politics.

Bush understood his position within the government as the leading figure responsible for the strategic ideas that had to be realized by his staff in day-to-day operations. This particular stance would give the maximum amount of responsibility to his cabinet and underlined the importance of the wise

⁷⁴ Gerhard Schröder, *Reifeprüfung: Reformpolitik am Ende des Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993), 70.

recruitment of his staff. The future President of the United States would rely, to a large extent, on the advice and information provided by his staff.

In contrast to George W. Bush, Gerhard Schröder came from a humble background and was obliged to climb the social hierarchy by tremendous personal efforts, and with the opportunities afforded by the rise of social democracy in West Germany, in the years from 1968 to 1998. He started his political career much earlier than his American counterpart and contrived to enhance his popularity in his early years. As an attorney, he fought cases with a huge resonance in the media and assumed the chair of the “Jusos” in order to shape his profile within the party. His ability to sense emerging opportunities and the changing moods of the population, combined with his skill at taking advantage of the media in his favor, made it possible for him to gain acceptance in the wide center of the electoral spectrum.

The high popular approval rates did not apply to his party. The national party board, with its more conservative understanding of social democracy in the 1960s and 1970s, was skeptical about the rising star in Lower Saxony. This skepticism was caused not only by his meteoric success, but especially by his self-assured, if not arrogant, way of bringing himself into the focus of public perception. Another aspect of harsh critique within his party, as well as by his political opponents, was the alleged opportunism of Schröder’s career. He shifted his political stance from an extreme left viewpoint to serving as mediator between society and business, and finally developed the conviction that a blossoming economy is one of the most important pillars of the welfare state. The latter approach was far too conservative and business-oriented for many members of the SPD.

During his service as State Governor, and later during the campaign for the chancellery, the relationship between Gerhard Schröder and his party was ambivalent. After four terms in the opposition on the national level, the SPD needed his popularity to oust the incumbent Helmut Kohl, but at the same time, numerous members of the party establishment had the feeling that Schröder was

not really convinced of their ideals. Gerhard Schröder was always someone who relied on his own capabilities and instincts rather than on the advice and support of others.

By comparing the careers of Bush and Schröder, one can see that their origins were completely different and that their decision-making and leadership styles also differed vastly. George W. Bush was a straightforward leader from the South, driven by moral values and a view for the “big picture,” in the sense of mythical Texas and the worldviews of men who own baseball clubs. He was, moreover, someone who relied on the skills and knowledge of his staff in a style of management that embraced a maximum of delegation, as taught at the Harvard School of Business, and as practiced by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. In contrast, Gerhard Schröder was a pragmatist with a sophisticated sense of current popular demands and an ability to relate to the masses, even beyond his own political party. Schröder concentrated political power in his own hands rather than delegating it to others.

Surely, their attitudes toward the U.S.-German relationship were different. George W. Bush's stance can be characterized as subdued and more or less ambivalent, since from his perspective, Germany (and Europe as a whole), played no decisive role in international relations. Schröder's notion of the United States was more salient. He was fully aware of the importance of the transatlantic partner, but at the same time, his picture of the United States contained a mixture of elements. He perceived American politics as superficial and inferior, but had a subliminal admiration for the general idea of the liberal American economy.

III. SHAPING FOREIGN POLICY

A. PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

Due to legal disputes over the Florida ballot, the presidential elections in 2000 were not settled until almost six weeks prior to the inauguration, which reduced the regular period for assigning the White House personnel by more than four weeks. As outlined above, this process plays a crucial role for George W. Bush, since he leads his team by general guidelines, and afterwards, lets the experts carry out the policy with minimal direct supervision. During his time in office as Governor of Texas, he required from staff members not only expertise, but also special attributes such as loyalty and affinity for his ideas. Furthermore, the president-elect was well aware of his lack of experience in relations with the U.S. Congress and in foreign affairs. Besides George W. Bush's recently gained but not experience-based knowledge in foreign affairs, this particular policy area of the United States would essentially be determined by the key personnel in the posts of Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense and his personal national security advisors in the White House.

In his first speech after the election, George W. Bush stressed an additional aspect that should influence the building of the White House Staff. "I was not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation. The President of the United States is the President of every single American, of every race and every background. Whether you voted for me or not, I will do my best to serve your interests, and I will work to earn your respect."⁷⁵

1. Building the Government

After the announcement of Dick (Richard Bruce) Cheney as Bush's running mate in July 2000, the first evaluation of possible candidates for cabinet

⁷⁵ George W. Bush, "Claim of the 43rd Presidency of the United States," December 14, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1069929.stm> (accessed March 12, 2008).

positions began and continued directly after the elections, even before the Supreme Court had finally settled the election in Bush's favor. Cheney, the former White House Chief of Staff under President Gerald Ford in 1974 and Secretary of Defense during the presidency of George H.W. Bush in 1989, was an experienced politician with extensive insights regarding Washington's political establishment and experience as a CEO in a company. "He [Bush] wanted Cheney because of Cheney's experience in foreign affairs (which Bush lacked). He wanted Cheney because Cheney had had a long career in politics (which Bush lacked). He wanted Cheney because Cheney was patient and calm (which Bush struggled with)."⁷⁶

Accordingly, Cheney was an appropriate personality to cover George W. Bush's deficits regarding the capitol's political insights. At the same time, this meant a considerable leap of faith, since Cheney became the decisive actor in selecting cabinet candidates before Bush could focus on this issue due to his involvement in the election campaign.

In company with Cheney, Bush continued this selection process. When the post of the Secretary of Defense was discussed, Cheney suggested Donald Rumsfeld, who was a deep-rooted conservative and could outweigh the influence of the new moderate Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who was an acknowledged expert in the military. "Rumsfeld had been Cheney's mentor when the new vice president-elect had first entered government in the 1970s. Cheney knew him to be a tough customer who could more than hold his own against Powell."⁷⁷ Rumsfeld had already held the position of Secretary of Defense during Gerald Ford's presidency in 1975-1977, had served as a member of Congress for several terms and as the U.S. Ambassador to NATO in 1973. Rumsfeld had even started to run for president in 1988 against the then-Vice President, George H.W.

⁷⁶ Carolyn B. Thompson and James W. Ware, *The Leadership Genius of George W. Bush – 10 Commonsense Lessons From the Commander in Chief* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 83.

⁷⁷ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier – The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 299.

Bush, but withdrew. In the periods between official positions, he worked in different companies as an advisor or chief executive.

In an interview, Rumsfeld promptly impressed George W. Bush with his frank nature and his clear ideas on how to conduct the transformation of the U.S. military to high-tech forces, consistent with Bush's vision of the modernization of the armed forces. "It was as if he [Rumsfeld] already had a plan. Rumsfeld was 43 when he had the job a quarter century ago. It was as if he were now saying, 'I think I've got some things I'd like to finish.'" ⁷⁸ George W. Bush's decision for Rumsfeld was clearly against his father's advice, who assumed from personal experience in Republican politics "that Rumsfeld was arrogant, self-important, too sure of himself and Machiavellian." ⁷⁹

The State Department was to be led by Colin Powell, a former four-star general and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) during the Gulf War in 1990-1991, who already gathered White House insights in the Reagan administration in 1987-1989 as the President's National Security Advisor. Powell was regarded as a rather moderate politician, who could have served under a Democratic president as well. He also had served as CJCS during the Clinton administration. In this capacity, he had set new limits on the political role of soldiers in the making of U.S. foreign policy. He had been a major force in defining the limits on U.S. military power seen as "lessons of Vietnam," and had also been a major obstacle to U.S. intervention in Southeastern Europe in the 1990s. Powell stressed the large differences between the neo-conservative and moderate factions in his last meeting with President George W. Bush prior to his retirement in 2004. "Bush needed to begin his new term by paying serious attention to the poisoned relations between his State and Defense departments. Senior officials in Rumsfeld's office at the Pentagon were actively and dangerously undermining the president's diplomacy." ⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), xii.

⁷⁹ Ibid., xii.

⁸⁰ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier – The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 10.

In 1999 Condoleezza Rice, after an initial meeting with George W. Bush in Austin and persuaded by George H.W. Bush in the Bush family compound in Kennebunkport, agreed to teach the candidate for president about foreign affairs and to join his campaign as foreign policy advisor.⁸¹ Already during George H.W. Bush's administration, Rice had served as the Soviet and East European Affairs Advisor with a key role in the unification of Germany and the reform of relations with the Russian Federation. Immediately before her assignment to the White House in 2001, she was professor of political science and provost at Stanford University. Like Colin Powell, Rice had maintained close ties to the Bush family.

The government of the United States, under the presidency of George W. Bush, consisted of experienced personnel capable of compensating for the new president's lack of experience in foreign affairs and decision-making in Washington. When Colin Powell decided to join the administration, his assignment demonstrated the moderate element of Bush's campaign, whereas Rumsfeld represented the conservative faction. The configuration of personalities in the White House represented an attempt to unite the divided population after the closely contested election, and at the same time, implied the risk of political cleavages within the administration. The strong personalities of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, both more experienced and older than Bush, spurred rumors from the onset that he would be led, rather than serving as the leader.

2. Presidency in a Unipolar World

When George W. Bush took office, he became the president of the only global superpower. The tendency to focus on unilateral political approaches in foreign policy after the end of the Cold War had been initiated by his predecessor, Bill Clinton.

Geir Lundestad summarized the American position, at the beginning of the 3rd millennium with regards to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military and

⁸¹ Mary B. Brown, *Condi – The Life of a Steel Magnolia* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 180.

economic power of the United States, and the military successes since 1991 as follows: “If the twentieth century belonged to the United States, the twenty-first will presumably be even more American.”⁸²

For the area of international relations, it is important how other countries, especially the U.S. allies, perceive this situation, since misperceptions can never be excluded. François Heisbourg, Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, categorized the different possible perceptions of the United States in a unipolar world, shortly before Bush was elected, as follows: First, the United States as the “benign hegemon,” characterized by attributes such as being “strong rather than brutal; candid and possibly naïve, rather than sly or crafty.” Secondly, the “U.S. as a rogue state,” certainly a provocative term that stresses the perception “that the United States is not acting as a status quo power.” Thirdly, the “trigger-happy sheriff” who emphasizes “military power as a tool of foreign policy, at the expense of the complexities of diplomacy and other forms of ‘soft’ power.” Finally, the perception of the United States as a “keystone of world order” in terms of a “guarantor of last resort, the only global-scale exporter of security.”⁸³

George W. Bush was well aware of the exposed role of the United States and his special position, which was consistent with his notion of following strategic visions. “The job of the president ... is to think strategically so that you can accomplish big objectives. As opposed to playing mini-ball. You can’t play mini-ball with the influence we have and expect there to be peace. You’ve gotta think, think BIG.”⁸⁴ Bush and his administration sought to shape international relations in favor of the United States and to influence the perceptions of U.S. allies and other countries.

⁸² Geir Lundestad, “Toward Transatlantic Drift?” in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17.

⁸³ François Heisbourg, “American Hegemony? Perceptions of the US Abroad,” *Survival*, no. 41-4, Winter 1999-2000, 9-16.

⁸⁴ George W. Bush quoted in Robert Draper, *Dead Certain – The Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Free Press, 2007), xii.

3. Leader of the Government in a Presidential System

The President of the United States and his administration are the decisive actors in shaping foreign policy. However, he cannot completely and arbitrarily change the nation's policies or even authorize the use of force. Although the president is the Commander in Chief and has a direct link to the military, "the Constitution grants Congress considerable authority over decisions to use force."⁸⁵

Under the umbrella of checks and balances, Congress, with its power of the purse and its power to require reports from the executive, plays an important role. It is important to what extent Congress and the White House actually bring influence to bear on specific issues. Among others, Robert Zoellick, former Under-Secretary of State and Deputy Chief of Staff at the White House during the George H.W. Bush administration, analyzed the current relationship after the Cold War and derived concrete suggestions for both Congress and the Executive.⁸⁶

During the Cold War era, the influence of allies on U.S. foreign policy could be observed in a number of international events such as the Nuclear Test Ban Negotiations (1958-1963), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), and the planned installation of the "Neutron Bomb" in Europe (1970s).⁸⁷ After the Cold War, the bargaining power of small allies had decreased, but it had not been eliminated.

George W. Bush could exercise his power in 2001 without extensive resistance in Congress, since the Republicans held the majority. However, the past had shown that even the majority of the presidential party in Congress did not necessarily support the policy of the White House (e.g., in the final phase of the Vietnam War under Richard Nixon), and even single members of Congress

⁸⁵ Robert B. Zoellick, "Congress and the Making of US Foreign Policy," *Survival*, no. 41-4, Winter 1999-2000, 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35-38.

⁸⁷ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies – The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1995).

actually have the opportunity to request reports from the White House. The constitutional powers of Congress obliged the president to choose a foreign policy with support on Capitol Hill.

B. CHANCELLOR GERHARD SCHRÖDER

Gerhard Schröder's first tenure in office was influenced by such foreign policy issues as the extension of NATO and the EU to the East, and the upheavals in the Balkans, including the Kosovo conflict. In this thesis, the main emphasis is laid on the impact of these external factors on German politics and the consequences for U.S.-German relations. Domestic issues are reflected to the extent that they had consequences for international relations. In this context, the parties of the governing coalition, the SPD, and the Greens (Die Grünen), draw special attention.

1. Leader of the Government in a Consensual System

a. *The Process of Building the Government*

Soon after the national elections on 27 September 1998, the negotiations for a coalition agreement between the SPD and the Greens began. The latter was undoubtedly the junior partner with 6.7 percent for the Greens and 40.9 percent for the SPD of the national electorate.⁸⁸

It is the nature of coalitions in a consensual system that differing political positions have to be discussed and eventually compromised. A quantitative analysis of both parties' manifestos reveals that there was a broad coherence on sociopolitical topics, but huge differences in environmental protection and foreign policy.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Bundeswahlleiter, Final Result of the National Elections in Germany 1998, http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/ergeb98/d/t/bun999_02.htm, (accessed February 27, 2008).

⁸⁹ Christoph Egle et. al., „Die Topographie des rot-grünen Projekts,“ *Das Rot-Grüne Projekt – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 1998 – 2002* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), 12.

b. *Cleavages within the Coalition Parties*

Besides conceptual cleavages between the SPD and the Greens, huge differences within both parties also had to be overcome. The Greens were divided into a middle-class faction ("Realos"), represented by the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, and a rather left faction ("Fundis") that derived from and was still influenced by the student movements of the 1960s. At the same time, the SPD had a center-left wing ("The New Center") with the chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, and a faction of the left, represented by the new Finance Minister and chairman of the SPD, Oskar Lafontaine, who had a stronger backing in the party than the chancellor candidate. In April 1998, the British newspaper *The Guardian* commented on Schröder's political career with regard to the peculiar relationship between him and his party:

He [Schröder] needs the SPD to realise his ambitions and the party needs him as its most formidable political operator and vote-winner. But it is an ambivalent and mutually suspicious relationship. For Schröder, the SPD is the vehicle to power. But he takes the main line to the masses via the media, bypassing the SPD apparatus. Schröder, like Kohl, is what the Germans call a *Machtmensch* – a man of power.⁹⁰

c. *Rivalry between the Chancellor and the SPD-Chairman*

In addition to the ambivalent relationship between Schröder and his party, on the individual level, open tensions arose between him and his Finance Minister, Oskar Lafontaine, which soon led to legislative inconsistency. The chancellor could hardly determine the government's policy in his well-known, pragmatic way when the SPD chairman, Oskar Lafontaine, followed his own agenda. In March 1999, John Schmid identified this cleavage as the cause of the absence of a clear path in German politics. "The new government, which is openly split between Mr. Schröder's pragmatist wing and Mr. Lafontaine's rival

⁹⁰ House of Commons, "The New Government in Germany," *Research Paper 98/94*, 30 October, 1998, 17.

clique of old-style socialists, has come under fire for a series of inconsistent pronouncements and policy reversals. The government already has confounded voters with zigzags on plans.”⁹¹ Only after the resignation of Lafontaine on 10 March 1999, following numerous quarrels with the chancellor, could Gerhard Schröder align the ministries and determine both domestic and foreign policies. Additionally, Schröder became chairman of the SPD and finally had the necessary power to realize his ideas. However, this did not change the ambivalent relationship between the chancellor and the party’s base in a sustainable manner.

Officially, in order to foster the “dialogue-process” with society, as a consequence of the concentration of executive power in his hands, Schröder established numerous expert-groups or commissions, such as the “Hartz-Kommission” to reorganize the job market.⁹² These groups often presented their results like political events with large media coverage, and this provided the chancellor with publicity and political credit. One might criticize this process, since the parliament was at least partially bypassed and the popular focus was directed to only one political actor. Due to his relatively unstable standing in the party, Schröder was continuously obliged to maintain his popularity. However, on 6 February 2004, owing to the party’s pressure, he had to hand over the post of chairman of the SPD to Franz Müntefering.

d. *The Coalition Agreement on Foreign Affairs*

For both Gerhard Schröder and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, aligning their own parties, especially on issues related to foreign affairs, turned out to be a huge challenge. The objectives of the coalition agreement (released on 20 October 1998), which generally followed the policy of

⁹¹ John Schmid, “Dispute Widens Rift With Socialist Government: Bonn’s Push for Tax Cuts Riles German Business,” *Herald Tribune*, March 5, 1999, <http://www.iht.com/articles/1999/03/05/mark.2.t.php?page=1> (accessed March 15, 2008).

⁹² Axel Murswiek, “Des Kanzlers Macht: Zum Regierungsstil Gerhard Schröders,” *Das Rot-Grüne Projekt – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 1998 – 2002* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), 119.

the former center-right government in foreign affairs, stated that NATO was the indispensable instrument for the stability and security of Europe, and explicitly embraced bilateral relations with the United States of America.⁹³

Frank Pfetsch investigated the subsequent coalition documents and identified some amendments to the basic guidelines in detail.⁹⁴ Besides conflict prevention, peaceful conflict settlement, and respect for human rights, strong emphasis was placed on the legal regulation of international relations. As a consequence, Schröder and Fischer continuously stressed the legal basis (e.g., UN Security Council resolutions) for the use of military force, in the subsequent years, in order to comply with the requirements of the left wings in both parties.

The weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* evaluated the coalition government's performance after the first one hundred days in office critically, "To put it mildly, the cooperation is in need of improvement. One might ... discount it as regular teething problems. However, it is less excusable, that the social democrats gained power without adequate preparation. There was no lack of objectives, but there was a lack of ideas of how to achieve them."⁹⁵

2. Challenges for the Red-Green Coalition in Foreign Affairs

Due to the constellation of the coalition and the cleavage within both parties, the initial phase of Gerhard Schröder's government was rather difficult. The stability of the coalition was tested by external factors soon after it took office. The red-green government had to cope with two issues in foreign affairs: first, the upcoming Kosovo conflict implied a breaking test, although the foundation for the employment of the German armed forces had already been set by the previous government, and second, the Iraq crisis in 1998-1999 determined the agenda in foreign affairs.

⁹³ Frank R. Pfetsch, „Die rot-grüne Außenpolitik,“ *Das Rot-Grüne Projekt – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 1998 – 2002*, (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), 383.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Roger de Weck, "Hundert schwache Tage – der Kanzler findet weder den richtigen Ton noch die schlüssige Politik," *Die Zeit*, no. 05/1999, 1.

The decision of the German Supreme Court in July 1994 already authorized German out-of-area operations and marked a new quality in the use of force, but stressed in this context, the decisive role of the German parliament, the Bundestag. "The Constitutional Supreme Court made very clear that all activities of the armed forces [e.g. operations in the former Yugoslavia since 1993] are in accord with the constitution – however, in such cases the government is obliged to gain a majority vote of the parliament in advance. A specific law should govern the parliamentary procedure in the future."⁹⁶ The regulating law was not passed until 18 March 2005.⁹⁷ However, all operations of the armed forces prior to that time were authorized in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision in 1994. The term "Parliament's Army" for the German military derived from the decisive role of the parliament for any operation of the German armed forces. The comprehensive commitments of the Kohl government in Bosnia proved the ability and willingness of re-united Germany to fulfill its international obligations, although this change involved a slow process in society.

Against the massive internal opposition of the pacifists and the far left wings of both coalition parties, Gerhard Schröder had to gather a majority in parliament in order to employ German troops in NATO's intervention in the Kosovo conflict in 1999. This is of special relevance, since the lack of a UN Security Council mandate challenged the fundamental directives of the coalition-agreement. According to Schröder, "It was perfectly clear, that this question would decide whether [the] red-green [coalition] was able to govern or we would just take a short guest role on the government bench."⁹⁸ His extraordinary personal commitment underlined the relevance of NATO and the moral aspect of this war in his eyes. Later, he underlined the importance of NATO for his policy at

⁹⁶ Tobias von Heymann, "Der lange Weg von Karlsruhe nach Kabul," *Das Parlament*, no. 21, May 5, 2005.

⁹⁷ German Bundestag, <http://www.bundestag.de/parlament/funktion/gesetze/parlamentsbeteiligung/index.html> (accessed March 20, 2008).

⁹⁸ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Kampe Verlag, 2006), 84.

this time. "It was clear to me, that the necessary loyalty in the Atlantic alliance would be the acid test for the ability of the red-green coalition to govern."⁹⁹ Since the end of 1998, German soldiers were deployed in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), since June 1999 in Kosovo for the KFOR Operation under UN SCR 1244, and since fall 1999 in FYROM in operation Amber Fox.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the red-green government shifted its stance on the use of force significantly in favor of the chancellor's political guideline.

Schröder's first months in office were dominated by efforts to mediate among the numerous factions in government instead of leading the coalition.¹⁰¹ He ensured that foreign and security policies, with regard to the United Kingdom and the United States, the German position demonstrated continuity and reliability. "The government handled the two most urgent foreign-policy challenges with amazing pragmatism: The Kosovo War and the Iraq crisis. ... And who had expected that the green Minister for Foreign Affairs would swallow his critique, when Americans and Britons were bombing Baghdad?"¹⁰²

3. Regency in a Growing Europe

After re-unification, Germany found its place again in the heart of Europe. In the 1990s, the Kohl government appreciated the nation's central role and shaped intra-European relations in a progressive and endorsable way. The 1998 campaign offered the first signs that there might be a shift in European politics in the future. According to a British study in 1998, "The SPD election campaign emphasized German interests in Europe, and Mr Schröder's campaign rhetoric was much less 'European' than Chancellor Kohl's. Chancellor Kohl was a

⁹⁹ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Kampe Verlag, 2006), 114.

¹⁰⁰ Frank R. Pfetsch, "Die rot-grüne Außenpolitik," *Das Rot-Grüne Projekt – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 1998 – 2002* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), 385.

¹⁰¹ Gunter Hofmann, "Die Versuchs-Regierung," *Die Zeit*, no. 05/1999, www.zeit.de/1999/05/199905.schroeder_.xml (accessed: March 14, 2008).

¹⁰² Jochen Buchsteiner, "Keine Sorge, keine Euphorie," *Die Zeit*, February 4, 1999, no. 05/1999, 4.

committed 'Europeanist' and at the forefront of moves towards political and economic integration. Mr Schröder is more cautious about the EU."¹⁰³ His first articulations on the European stage ("I want my money back") confirmed that Schröder was willing to stick to the promises of his populist campaign. With regard to his approach to European policy, the corresponding observations at that time were critical. "Above all, the impudent, sometimes aggressive diction of the chancellor is irritating. Everybody realized that Germany pays too much to the EU cash box. However, how Gerhard Schröder tries to capitalize on Bonn's 'wasted EU-payments' at home is alarming."¹⁰⁴ In retrospect, Schröder acknowledged that the anti-European polemic was inappropriate, and he regrets his first period of governance in European affairs.¹⁰⁵ Apparently, Gerhard Schröder's lack of experience in international politics initially constrained his view on the actual relevance of international relations and institutions as a whole.

European crisis management in 1999, under the German Presidency of the European Council (including the Kosovo conflict, the further development of the ESDP, and the dissolution of the European Commission after a political scandal) was dominated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, who successfully established his position as a decisive influence in Europe.¹⁰⁶ As outlined above, Schröder found his power and personal style resurging after the resignation of his party-competitor, Oskar Lafontaine. In the context of European policy, the following example might demonstrate this thesis and underline typical patterns of his way to govern, which raised questions as to whether the new German government would actually stand for continuity.¹⁰⁷ According to a

¹⁰³ House of Commons, "The New Government in Germany," *Research Paper 98/94*, October 30, 1998, 23.

¹⁰⁴ Christian Wernicke, "Sie üben noch – Europapolitik," *Die Zeit*, February 4, 1999, no. 05/1999, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 326.

¹⁰⁶ Tobias Ostheim, "Praxis und Rhetorik deutscher Europapolitik," *Das Rot-Grüne Projekt – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 1998 – 2002* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), 356.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 356.

proposal for a new European Council Directive, all car-makers were obliged to redeem old cars without any fees. The directive had already been discussed on the secretary-level and was widely expected to be approved without any resistance. After consultations with representatives of the German car business, however, Gerhard Schröder personally stopped the directive and thereby abused his temporary position as President of the Council, against common practice. He formed a coalition of opposing European Union countries, and eventually succeeded in stopping the initiative. Schröder underlined, again, his ability to sense popular attitudes and his willingness to assert them. Polls by the European Union revealed an increasing skepticism of the German population regarding EU membership since the end of the 1990s, in general, and against concrete EU projects in particular.¹⁰⁸

C. CONCLUSION

George W. Bush's staff assignments arguably constituted the decisive acts that would shape the future of international relations in the 21st century, since Bush was willing to delegate many decisions to his experts. His cabinet consisted of numerous people with extensive experience in former administrations. The assignments of Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Armitage made it possible for members of the conservative "Vulcans" group to shape U.S. foreign affairs. Even Condoleezza Rice, his National Security Advisor, was a leading member of this group, although her exact stance in terms of operational code and ideal of statecraft is difficult to determine across the breadth of her meteoric career. An exception in Bush's staff was the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who was convinced that George W. Bush would follow a multilateral-oriented foreign policy, as his father had, according to his "compassionate conservatism" approach, which determined Bush's campaign for office. At that time, one could

¹⁰⁸ Wilhelm Knelangen, "Eine neue deutsche Europapolitik für eine andere EU?" *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, (APuZ 38-39/2005), <http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/MWSBSJ.html> (accessed March 18, 2008).

expect that either the conservative group in the White House and the Pentagon, or the more moderate Secretary of State, would convince the president and subsequently set the agenda of foreign policy.

Gerhard Schröder was elected chancellor because of his large popularity in the center of the electoral spectrum. The backing of his party was still limited in comparison with the competitive SPD chairman, Oskar Lafontaine. As a consequence, Schröder had to continuously maintain his popularity in order to overcome the party's programmatic pressure and the inter-coalition tensions. After the withdrawal of Lafontaine, he regained his pre-election power and the government's policy increasingly carried his personal signature. In close company with Joschka Fischer, after several months of teething troubles in the area of foreign affairs, the German government gradually achieved its profile. The Kosovo conflict, especially, challenged the red-green coalition in an early period of the tenure. The new German government persisted in the acid test and demonstrated its international reliability. Schröder succeeded in demonstrating alliance loyalty by his personal commitments. In this context, it is noteworthy that Schröder, who had concentrated political power to the maximum extent possible in his own hands, was willing to let his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, handle most of the decisions in this area of politics. His intervention against the proposed European Council directive, however, showed that foreign countries had to expect Schröder to make some ad hoc decisions contrary to common rules at times, especially when they would provide positive popular effects at home.

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IV. EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

On 31 January 2008, former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt addressed an open letter in the political weekly *Die Zeit* to the people of the United States of America, asking twelve questions about U.S. foreign policy and underlining its importance and relevance to Europe, in general, and to Germany in particular. U.S. foreign policy matters for Europe, Schmidt wrote, “In the course of the last century, we have learned that the foreign policy of each individual American president has had for us Europeans a nearly overwhelming importance.”¹⁰⁹ By using the words “each president,” he stressed the impact of every single administration on international relations.

In this chapter, key examples of the relationship between U.S. and German government leaders are reviewed to determine different approaches to enhancing the relationship between Germany and the United States.

A. JIMMY CARTER – HELMUT SCHMIDT

During the 1960s and 1970s, the exceptionally close ties between West Germany and the United States in the 1950s had already loosened. This process began in 1961 with the changing of the guard from the Eisenhower Administration to that of John F. Kennedy. An aging chancellor Konrad Adenauer was unsettled by the new strategy of “flexible response,” and this was visible in the Berlin crisis of that year. The difficulties of bi-lateral relations witnessed a further troublesome episode in 1966 amid the disagreements of Lyndon Baines Johnson and Ludwig Erhard over burden sharing in the era of the Vietnam War. The chief issue to be examined here soon followed this episode. One aspect of this policy divergence was the policy of *détente* from 1969 onwards, or the “*Ostpolitik*,” of Helmut Schmidt’s predecessor, Willy Brandt. At the same time, the

European threat assessment changed due to relaxed political conditions, such as the CSCE talks (1973-1975), and the need for a closing of the ranks between West Germany and the United States was gradually declining. The situation in the United States was characterized by scandals of the political elite, such as the Watergate scandal, conflicts between ethnic groups, and the weak global economy connected with the 1973 oil crisis.

United States–West German relations seemed to be in excellent condition in 1976. A draft of a memorandum for Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, on the occasion of a ceremony on the bicentennial of U.S. independence in Frankfurt claimed: “The relations between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, in the last quarter century mostly close and cordial, has never been better than today.”¹¹⁰ At that time, the heads of government were Gerald Ford and Helmut Schmidt, who cultivated a transatlantic friendship and resolved rare arguments privately. After the election of the Democrat Jimmy (James) Earl Carter as President of the United States in November of the same year, the relationship started to change dramatically.

Klaus Wiegriefe identified the following initial causes for the later tensions: there were completely different situations in the two countries (the American willingness to embrace change; the German preference for continuity); the lack of knowledge of one another complicated the mutual understanding (Carter’s interest in foreign affairs did not begin before his candidacy for president); Helmut Schmidt’s view of the United States was based on his observations of the Midwest and the northeastern states rather than the United States as a whole (including the South); and completely different views on the role of a political leader, characterized by differing types of political leadership (Carter focused his

¹⁰⁹ Helmut Schmidt, “Liebe Amerikaner, was kann die Welt von euch erwarten? – Zwölf Fragen an die Kandidaten,” *Die Zeit*, January 31, 2008, <http://images.zeit.de/text/2008/06/01-USA> (accessed February 20, 2008).

¹¹⁰ Klaus Wiegriefe, *Das Zerwürfnis – Helmut Schmidt, Jimmy Carter und die Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen* (Berlin: Prophylläen, 2005), 11.

campaign on his personal integrity, values, and faith in America's mission, whereas Helmut Schmidt saw his position as chief executive of the country in a difficult period of change).¹¹¹

In addition to the structural problems already at an early stage, personal troubles arose. During the campaign for the presidency in 1976, Helmut Schmidt publicly supported the incumbent Gerald Ford (although he quickly sent a note of apology to Carter), and after the elections refused to congratulate Carter personally in accordance with common practice, but just sent a telegram. The German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* analyzed this situation as follows: "That way the new era between the global power USA and its strongest ally in Europe starts with personal dissonances. The period of German-American partnership, which the chancellor praised as 'the best relationship ever' between Washington and Bonn, seems to draw to a close."¹¹²

Soon after inauguration, Carter changed the American stance on a number of crucial issues, such as the relationship to Russia, the stationing of neutron bombs in Germany, and the reaction to the dollar crash or the oil crisis, which affected the Federal Republic of Germany. He also broke, to a large extent, with his predecessor's political approach of consultations and negotiations.¹¹³ As a consequence, the already burdened relationship between Schmidt and Carter was additionally stressed on the political level. It was a question of diplomacy and bargaining to resolve the respective problems against the background of differing positions. The previous relationship between Schmidt and Ford had made it possible for the smaller ally to influence the decision-making process of the United States and to assert German interests; the arrangement with the new president was much more difficult. The notion of the emerging middle power, West Germany, was completely different. "Washington

¹¹¹ Klaus Wiegrefe, *Das Zerwürfnis – Helmut Schmidt, Jimmy Carter und die Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen* (Berlin: Prophylläen, 2005), 48 ff.

¹¹² "Bonn: Nach Carters Wahl ratlos," *Der Spiegel*, no. 46/1976, November 08, 1976, 25.

¹¹³ Klaus Wiegrefe, *Das Zerwürfnis – Helmut Schmidt, Jimmy Carter und die Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen* (Berlin: Prophylläen, 2005), 72 ff.

expected more support, Bonn more autonomy.”¹¹⁴ An example of this contradiction was Carter’s Locomotive Theory on how to spur the weak world economy. Carter urged West Germany to support this approach even prior to his official inauguration, but Chancellor Schmidt, a graduate in economics, rejected this “order” and asserted that West Germany would proceed with a more successful strategy.

Besides structural differences, Klaus Wiegrefe also identified several personal issues that led to the discord between the United States and West Germany in the late 1970s. The West German politicians thought that they knew the United States, but this assumption was accurate only with respect to the center of political gravity in Washington and the Midwest and did not apply to the new president from the South and, as a consequence, their ignorance led to personal contention with Carter.

Owing perhaps to an overreaching assertiveness, (the *Financial Times* had just named Schmidt “Man of the Year” in 1976)¹¹⁵ Schmidt criticized notoriously, and even publicly, his American counter-part in an unprecedented way. He tried to define his personal position in international politics as clearly distinct from that of Washington and instrumentalized the latent anti-Americanism that had evolved since the Vietnam War among German elites (not least among SPD members) and in other parts of Europe. This stance was inconsistent in that he pinned his hope on U.S. support in the context of the NATO Double-Track Decision (12 December 1979), and West German policy as a whole embraced a close transatlantic partnership. Schmidt himself said, “The most important factor contributing to stability is and remains the partnership between Europeans and Americans. This historic partnership remains a constant of our policy.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Klaus Wiegrefe, *Das Zerwürfnis – Helmut Schmidt, Jimmy Carter und die Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen* (Berlin: Prophylläen, 2005), 372.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 99.

¹¹⁶ Helmut Schmidt, *Perspectives on Politics* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), 40.

Helmut Schmidt actively extended West Germany's autonomy in a kind of defensive nationalism, which implied to a certain extent its isolation within Western Europe. "In the image of the 'Model Germany' the entitlement to be a role model for the other European countries became manifest, not only by way of economic policy, but also in the policy of détente, which in Bonn's self-conception was conducted 'in the name of Europe' (Timothy Garton Ash)."¹¹⁷ The principle of consultations between equal partners was an important theme of the bilateral relationship, from Schmidt's perspective, and consistent with his view of the growing role of West Germany. He saw this principle breached by Carter and, hoping for changes after the presidential elections of 1980 appreciated his first meeting with newly elected President Ronald Reagan in May 1981. Schmidt stated, "It was therefore an encouragement to me that President Reagan, ... and I were in complete agreement on the central role of early and close consultation among allies."¹¹⁸ The American President summarized the same meeting in his diary as follows: "Meeting with Schmidt, regarded as a show of friendship."¹¹⁹

Helmut Schmidt continued to make publicly offensive comments about his American counterpart, probably because his expectations were not served to a sufficient extent. Klaus Larres summarized the shifts in U.S. foreign policy during the Reagan administration as follows, in a formulation that might have described exactly Helmut Schmidt's perception: "Reagan's election as President can ... be seen as a shift from benign neglect to arrogant neglect in America's relations with its European allies."¹²⁰ In spite of his demonstration of sympathy with Carter's successor with the words "I like this man," he was quoted in *Der Spiegel* with the following statement, after he had hosted Ronald Reagan in 1982: "Meanwhile, Reagan appears to be like the Soviet [leader] ... Leonid Brezhnev: Also the

¹¹⁷ Klaus Wiegrefe, *Das Zerwürfnis – Helmut Schmidt, Jimmy Carter und die Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen* (Berlin: Prophylläen, 2005), 385.

¹¹⁸ Helmut Schmidt, *Perspectives on Politics* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), 42.

¹¹⁹ Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 20.

¹²⁰ Klaus Larres, "West Germany and European Unity in U.S. Foreign Policy," *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945 – 1990 – A Handbook*, Vol. 2 (Washington: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 65-66.

American president merely recites those things that were written by his aides on slips of paper beforehand. You cannot discuss politics with Reagan in a reasonable way, [because] he [Reagan] often finds different opinions on his script, and then he recites those right off the bat.”¹²¹ Public statements of this kind and arguments about political issues, such as West-East trade, might have led to a rather tense relationship.

B. GEORGE H. W. BUSH – HELMUT KOHL

Helmut Kohl, leader of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), came into power via a parliamentary vote of no confidence in 1982 and built a new governing coalition with the liberal party, the FDP. This coalition partner was previously in Helmut Schmidt’s government and provided the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Hans Dietrich Genscher). As a consequence, in West Germany’s international policies, continuity and experience were assured in the crises of the early 1980s and into the era of the end of the Cold War.

Transatlantic relations improved after the election of Helmut Kohl in 1983, and the personal link between the leaders of government in the two countries had a significant improvement amid the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Crisis. After Kohl’s first visit, Ronald Reagan noted, “Our meeting was good. He is entirely different than his predecessor – very warm and outgoing. ... We did hit it off and I believe we’ll have a fine relationship.”¹²²

In the course of time, even in the relationship between Kohl and Reagan, the Soviet Union’s predominating stance of vigilance in American policy was a cause of tensions, but there were no public recriminations. Unilateral American pressures constituted one of the factors that led to a closer relationship between Germany and its European neighbors, especially France. This led, eventually, to an integrated European market in 1992 and later to a European Union with a common currency.

¹²¹ “Deutsche Sissy,” *Der Spiegel*, no. 28/1982, July 12, 1982, 24.

¹²² Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 113.

Transatlantic relations changed in a sustained way with the presidency of George H.W. Bush in 1989-1993. *The New York Times* described the relevance of personal relations for the newly elected president as follows: "Friendship is Mr. Bush's ideology, and personal diplomacy has driven his Presidency."¹²³ As the former Vice President of the United States, he was not a freshman in the field of international relations and became acquainted with most of the international decision-makers prior to his presidency, which ensured continuity in personal relations.

Soon after his inauguration, the U.S. president realized that "further European integration, growing transatlantic interdependence, and German unification were inevitable. The Bush administration embarked on a course to respond to these developments and shape events."¹²⁴

In this context, West Germany played a significant role, and this role reflected the good personal relationship between the two heads of government. In the spring of 1989, there were growing tensions about the course of action to take in light of the changes in the USSR, especially concerning the proposed modernization of short-range missiles in Europe. NATO was about to split in its common stance; the German chancellor favored negotiations with the USSR, but the United States preferred a firm position on dealing with Moscow. Instead of arguing this issue, George H.W. Bush decided to react in a cautious way and resisted pressure from Congress and the United Kingdom. Unlike his predecessor, the American president apparently shifted his political attention from the UK to the continent, a step that reflected the evolving political and economic power of the latter. On 1 June 1989, Bush publicly stated the new relevance of West Germany and its chancellor, Helmut Kohl. "The United States

¹²³ Maureen Dowd, "The Houston Summit – The Personal Means a Lot These Days," *The New York Times*, A-14, July 12, 1990.

¹²⁴ Klaus Larres, "West Germany and European Unity in U.S. Foreign Policy," *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945 – 1990 – A Handbook*, Vol. 2 (Washington: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 67.

and the Federal Republic have always been firm friends and allies, ... but today we share an added role as partners in leadership.”¹²⁵

The close and trusting relationship of the two heads of government became evident in the vast consultations in the context of the re-unification of Germany in the era 1989-1991. In the course of the demise of the Soviet superpower, George H.W. Bush trusted to the political evaluation of his German counterpart regarding the expected reactions of Mikhail Gorbachev. He even took advice from Helmut Kohl, who always stressed the high relevance of the transatlantic relationship throughout the whole process of the years 1989 and 1990 and discussed each important step with the American president.

This high level of information sharing enabled George H.W. Bush to resist domestic pressure and stick to personal agreements. In one of the numerous telephone calls with the German chancellor in the context of an upcoming re-unification process, the American president assured him, “In spite of Congressional posturing, the U.S. will stay calm and support reforms. The euphoric excitement in the U.S. runs the risk of unforeseen action in the USSR or East Germany. We will not exacerbate the problem by having the President of the United States posturing on the Berlin Wall.”¹²⁶ As a consequence of the close links between George H.W. Bush and Helmut Kohl, a new special German-American relationship was evolving. “If there is indeed going to be a new ‘special relationship’, ... it is being designed and run by and for insiders in much the same way as the ‘special relationship’ the United States had (until yesterday) with Great Britain.”¹²⁷

The close ties between Germany and the United States were not limited to the re-unification process, but survived its aftermath and shaped ongoing day-to-

¹²⁵ R.W. Apple Jr., “Bush in Europe: Looking to Germans,” *The New York Times*, A-6, June 2, 1989.

¹²⁶ Andrew Nagorski, “Behind the Wall’s Fall,” *Newsweek*, New York, November 8, 1999, Vol. 134, no. 19, 42.

¹²⁷ Christopher Hitchens, “Washington’s Kohl,” *Harper’s Magazine*, New York, October 1990, Vol. 281, no. 1685, Research Library, 75.

day decisions, especially regarding the future of Eastern Europe. This became apparent, for instance, in a conference lasting several days, which was conducted in an informal way in March 1992. Besides the content of the talks, Helmut Kohl underlined the importance of the bi-lateral relationship in a subsequent press conference: "It became apparent that the United States of America and reunified Germany are linked by very strong bonds of friendship and partnership. No matter what will happen in the world, this friendship, this partnership is of existential importance for us Germans."¹²⁸

Throughout his service as chancellor, Helmut Kohl always acted as a convinced Atlanticist. His steady commitment to the transatlantic alliance during the re-unification negotiations underlined this strict stance. When the de facto absence as an active ally in the Gulf War in 1991, which united numerous allies in a successful multinational operation, raised questions about Germany's reliability, Helmut Kohl publicly demonstrated his support for the tough line of the United States against Saddam Hussein, and that the good transatlantic relationship could not be damaged.

C. BILL CLINTON – HELMUT KOHL

The importance of the transatlantic relationship for Helmut Kohl continued to shape German-U.S. relations during the presidency of Bill Clinton, which began in January 1993. However, during Clinton's tenure the transatlantic alliance faced several crises. "The two sides of the Atlantic were soon at odds over Bosnia, where the U.S.'s emerging 'lift-and-strike' policy differed dramatically from Europe's reluctance to take sides in ex-Yugoslavia's civil wars. No sooner had the allies recovered at Dayton [in 1995] than the Kosovo conflict again threatened unity."¹²⁹

¹²⁸ The President's News Conference with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, March 30, 1992, 28, 13, Research Library, 523.

¹²⁹ Geir Lundestad, "Towards Transatlantic Drift?" in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

Despite controversial positions on the use of force, due to Helmut Kohl's historical caution regarding the deployment of German soldiers, the excellent relationship was estimated to be more important than disputes on political issues. An example of this pro-American stance was the upcoming conflict with Iraq in 1998. In spite of the fact that Helmut Kohl was not consulted prior to the annual European security conference, in Munich, about the fact that the issue of support in the event of an Iraq War would be discussed, he did not react in an offended way, but spontaneously offered more commitments of the German military in the former Yugoslavia.¹³⁰

Even when Bill Clinton was preoccupied with a romantic affair and the subsequent public prosecution reduced the credibility of the American head of state, the conservative Helmut Kohl reacted only in terms of concerns about the weakened status of the United States and hence the transatlantic alliance. He publicly backed the position of Bill Clinton as far as possible and hoped for an ending of this situation as soon as possible.¹³¹

In the final phase of the German election in 1998, Bill Clinton publicly supported the position of his close German partner, as he did before with Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin, and Mexico's president, Ernesto Zedillo. Clinton not only appreciated Kohl's diplomatic capability, but even stated on the occasion of his visit to Germany, "This magic moment in history [Germany's re-unification] did not simply arrive, ... It was made, and made largely by the vision and determined leadership of Germany and its chancellor for nine years. ... Though many German citizens may be uncertain of the courageous course, you are clearly on the right side of history."¹³² Soon after this statement, the White House Press Secretary conceded that there was no intention to influence the elections

¹³⁰ Edward Mortimer, "Kohl Support For Alliance Against Iraq," *Financial Times*, London, February 9, 1998, 4.

¹³¹ Peter Norman, "Superpower 'Should Carry Out Its Duties' – Bonn Kohl Stresses Need for Effective Leadership," *Financial Times*, London, September 14, 1998, 6.

¹³² Elizabeth Shogren, "Clinton Sings Praises of a Besieged Kohl," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1998, 6.

and that the president met the challenger, Gerhard Schröder, on the same occasion. However, according to the *Washington Post*, Bill Clinton insisted on expressing a personal sense of his admiration for Kohl in his speech against the advice of White House aides to avoid a partisan tone.¹³³ This kind of public partisanship of a leader of the United States or Germany had only been observed two decades before, with Helmut Schmidt and Gerald Ford in 1976.

Helmut Kohl was the last German chancellor who grew up under the direct influence of World War II and its aftermath, and this influenced his strong willingness to maintain close relations with the United States. In addition to political changes in the security environment in Europe, personal experiences differing from Kohl's might influence future German-American relations. Robert G. Livingston regarded such changes as inevitable: "Kohl has infused the bilateral relationship with nostalgic sentimentality. His replacement by a leader from a younger generation will inevitably attenuate the connection."¹³⁴

D. CONCLUSION

The comparison of various personal relationships between U.S. and German leaders demonstrates that the discord between George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder was not the first to arise within the last five decades. The historical evidence does not support an assumption that the American conservatives, the Republicans, and the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) on the one hand, and the American Democrats and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in Germany on the other hand, would cooperate better, since they might share more common values. The left-of-center chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, got along much better with the conservative president, Gerald Ford, than with his democratic successor, Jimmy Carter. This observation also applies to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who shared a kind of friendship with the

¹³³ William Drozdiak, "Clinton Praises Kohl – German's Campaign Gets a Needed Boost," *The Washington Post*, A-29, May 15, 1998.

¹³⁴ Robert G. Livingston, "Life after Kohl? – We'll always Have Germany," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1997, Vol. 76, no. 6, 6.

conservative president, George H.W. Bush, but cooperated on a professional level with his conservative predecessor, Ronald Reagan.

In all of the above investigated relationships between American and German heads of government, personal factors mattered and had an impact on the political level. One of the most significant factors for close transatlantic relations was the element of consultation. In contrast, periods of a predominant role for the United States seem to be rather counterproductive. American pressure on Germany's foreign policies resulted either in publicly stated criticism (Helmut Schmidt on Jimmy Carter) combined with a Europe-focused orientation of the foreign policy, or indirectly expressed disagreement by concentrating on shaping the European Community (Helmut Kohl and Ronald Reagan). The closest ties between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany could be seen in periods of "partners in leadership" that recognized the rising détente between West and East, the enhanced autonomy of Germany, and Germany's strong political and economic role in Europe. Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl insisted on sharing not only the burdens of the transatlantic alliance, but also the responsibilities, while asserting national interests.¹³⁵ In these times of cordial links between the two countries, American presidents had to face rising domestic pressure to increase U.S. predominance.

Questions about the reliability of reunited Germany and its economic struggle in the aftermath of re-unification challenged Germany's central position in the 1990s. However, the decision of the German Constitutional Supreme Court in 1994, authorizing German out-of-area operations approved by Parliament, and the commitments in the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts, proved Germany's ability and willingness to fulfill its international obligations.

NATO survived the aftermath of the Cold War and was the unifying framework for the transatlantic relationship between the United States and

¹³⁵ Hubert Zimmermann, "Security Exporters: Germany, the United States, and Transatlantic Cooperation," in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 128 ff.

Germany until the discord of 2002. In contrast with the German government, the George W. Bush administration did not seem to feel obliged to NATO in the same way as its predecessors did.

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V. THE DISCORD OF THE IRAQ WAR

A. TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP AND THE IMPACT OF 9/11

When George W. Bush took the oath of office on 20 January 2001, his German counterpart, Gerhard Schröder, had already experienced more than two years in office and could finally establish his personal line on foreign policy, in company with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, after tremendous initial problems. During the first year, the German government had proved in a difficult external environment, especially the crisis over the Kosovo War, that re-united Germany was a reliable partner within the international framework, emphasizing alliance loyalty and the importance of the transatlantic relationship.

The transatlantic relations in 1998-2000 could be described as neutral; they were not filled with tensions and did not reach an exceptionally amicable level. Gerhard Schröder's contacts with American representatives were strongly focused on Washington's governmental area and Midwest entrepreneurs. Schröder's initial situation in January 2001, when George W. Bush took office, bears a striking similarity to that of Helmut Schmidt, who also had exclusive contact with Northeastern Americans, and admitted that a probable reason for later discords had their origins in the fact that he had no actual understanding of the new president, Jimmy Carter, who came from the South with different values and visions. George W. Bush campaigned in 2000 with a focus on visions, morality and integrity, as Carter had in 1976. Bush wished to draw a contrast with what he perceived as a lack of values in the Clinton White House. Schröder was critical of a type of political control that raises a claim for a "spiritual-moral leadership" and that expands political competences into society.

The U.S. president revealed soon after his inauguration the stance of his administration regarding the position of the United States within the global framework of international relations. George W. Bush's first decisions, in early 2001, affecting the international community, were in diametric conflict with the

German multilateral and institutional approach embracing norms. "In seeking a balance of power favouring freedom, ..., in rejecting the Kyoto Protocol, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and other arms control and human rights conventions, Bush and his advisors display a fundamental disdain for the norms, institutions and rules that bind the community in whose interests they are ostensibly acting."¹³⁶

1. Denial of the Kyoto Protocol – Much More Than a Domestic Decision

The ignorance of international relations with regard to the German government was especially evident in Bush's decision to reject the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to cut emissions of greenhouse gases. He did this without any promise of future negotiations or previous consultations with the closest allies, on the eve of Schröder's first visit to the White House on 29 March 2001, and against the background of the upcoming conference on the global climate in Germany in July 2001. The Kyoto Protocol had a decisive meaning for Schröder, since he relied on his partner within a weak coalition, the Greens. To underline the importance of this issue, Schröder had sent a personal letter to the U.S. president on 19 March 2001, ten days in advance.¹³⁷

It is noteworthy that Bush's decision was not without resistance in the administration. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, basically agreed with the president's decision, but at the same time, he was afraid of the international implications. Hence, he strongly suggested emphasizing further international commitments on a mutual solution by inserting an additional statement in the decision paper as follows: "And we're going to work with our friends and allies to see how we can move forward together on emissions. And then we're going to

¹³⁶ Melvyn P. Leffler, "9/11 And The Past and Future of American Foreign Policy," *International Affairs*, no. 79, Vol. 5, 2003, 1061.

¹³⁷ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Kampe Verlag, 2006), 264.

have to go talk to our friends and allies about this before we do it.”¹³⁸ Instead, Bush held a meeting on the Kyoto protocol issue without his Secretary of State and decided to reject it, disregarding the possible international tensions. “News of the letter [on the Kyoto protocol], followed by a statement from Rice to EU ambassadors that Kyoto was ‘dead,’ drove the first of what would be many wedges between the Bush administration and traditional U.S. allies in Europe.”¹³⁹ The decision-making process in the White House, in the case of the Kyoto Protocol, demonstrated at the very beginning of the Bush administration not only the unilateral approach in foreign affairs, but also the isolated role of Powell within the administration. In retrospect, Schröder judged the Kyoto Protocol issue as one of two fundamental decisions that contributed to the loss in confidence of the United States around the world.¹⁴⁰

Der Spiegel summarized in 2001 the Bush-Schröder relationship, which was limited to only a few phone calls and official meetings until September 2001, as a “professional non-relationship.”¹⁴¹ However, the affront during Schröder’s visit to Washington and the rare exchange between the two heads of government did not cause any public complaints from the German side.

2. The Attacks of 9/11 – German Alliance

On 11 September 2001, the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington changed the world in numerous ways. With regard to the U.S.-German relationship, one might assume that the immediate aftermath of 9/11 “was to be the high point of German cooperation with the George W. Bush administration.”¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier – The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 327.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 328.

¹⁴⁰ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Kampe Verlag, 2006), 521.

¹⁴¹ Ralf Beste, “Zickzack im Weißen Haus,” *Der Spiegel*, no. 17, 2001. 144.

¹⁴² Stephen F. Szabo, *Parting Ways – The Crisis in German-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 17.

When the breaking news of the attack was sent around the world, Gerhard Schröder was in his chancellery preparing his speech for the annual budget debate and the visit of the Hungarian Prime Minister was set on his agenda. Schröder recalled that his first reaction had been, “My first reactions were powerlessness followed by anger at the perpetrators. ... At that moment I did not reflect on the more profound, political implications.”¹⁴³ Shortly afterwards, he assembled a crisis reaction team in the chancellery in Berlin with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, the Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily, and the Minister of Defense, Rudolph Scharping. At that time, within two hours after the attacks, he established the political line of “unlimited solidarity” with the United States, which he based on his first overwhelming impression. This important decision was his personal one, and it had already been made prior to further consultations with the Federal Security Council, the cabinet, the coalition, and the opposition. At the time, Schröder was well aware that the U.S. reaction would probably include military means. Such an option notwithstanding, he sent a telegram to George W. Bush, in which he affirmed Germany’s unlimited solidarity.¹⁴⁴ Following his typical pattern, Schröder had already created facts regarding unlimited support for the United States; the subsequent consultation would only specify the practical means of support, but not whether Germany would support the United States. In the evening of the next day, Gerhard Schröder personally guaranteed George W. Bush that Germany would contribute to the U.S. counteraction without any reservation.¹⁴⁵ In response to the support offered by numerous countries, the American president declared in his address to the nation on 11 September 2001, “And on behalf of the American people, I thank the many world leaders who have called to offer their condolences and assistance. America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against

¹⁴³ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 163.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 164.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 173.

terrorism.”¹⁴⁶ The unanimously supported UN SCR 1368 on 12 September 2001 was the legal foundation for the use of force against the Taliban regime, in Afghanistan, as an act of self-defense.

On 19 September 2001, Gerhard Schröder defined his understanding of “unconditional solidarity” in a speech in the German parliament, but added a vague limitation in terms of avoiding “adventures”:

In view of these unprecedented attacks, Germany stands at the side of the United States of America. Our commitment to the political and moral solidarity with the USA now is more than self-evident. ... Linked to the duty of the alliance [Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty], to which we adhere, there also corresponds a right; and this right is called that of information and consultation. We, as Germans and Europeans, want to attain unconditional solidarity with the USA in all necessary measures. I emphasize: Germany is ready to take risks – in terms of the military, as well -, but not [to participate] in adventures. The latter is not asked of us, thanks to the sober-minded position of the American administration.¹⁴⁷

Besides their deep sympathy with the American people, Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer wanted to assure the United States of Germany’s alliance loyalty in this crucial situation, right from the very beginning, since they had already witnessed a strong resistance within the red-green governing coalition in the Kosovo conflict only one and a half years before. Additionally, for Schröder, Germany’s new role as an actor in the post-9/11 environment was, even more than before, a personal concern, which explains his extensive commitments in parliament in this case. After the beginning of the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan on 11 October 2001, he underlined the legitimacy of the military operation and stressed the relevance of re-united Germany on the international stage. “Only ten years ago, nobody would have expected us to contribute in

¹⁴⁶ George W. Bush, “Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation,” September 11, 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html> (accessed April 12, 2008).

¹⁴⁷ Gerhard Schröder, “Regierungserklärung vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zu den Anschlägen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika,” September 19, 2001, http://www.zeit.de/2001/39/schroeder_regierungserklaerung.xml (accessed March 12, 2008).

international commitments for security and freedom, justice and stability by anything other than 'secondary support'. ... I thoroughly state this with regard to my own thinking and action. This period of German post-war politics – I claimed this just after September 11 – is irretrievably gone.”¹⁴⁸

The red-green coalition was far from united as far as demonstrating “unconditional solidarity” in support of the use of military force as a reaction to the attacks of 9/11. Dissent was expressed by eight representatives of the Green faction in the German Parliament, who asserted in public opposition to the political line of the chancellor, “In conclusion: The war against Afghanistan is politically wrong, does not serve the goals of combat against terrorism, is lacking humanitarian responsibility and shall bring new political problems. It is a misadventure, in which no one, including the Federal Republic, should participate.”¹⁴⁹ The relevance of this initiative derived from the numerous critics of Schröder’s policy within the government and the fact that this opposition mirrored the changes in attitude of a large number of the German population. Immediately after 9/11 “200,000 Germans gathered spontaneously at the Brandenburg Gate for a pro-American rally”¹⁵⁰ and 80 percent of the Germans agreed to U.S. air raids in Afghanistan in early October 2001. However, the approval rate dropped down to around 50 percent when the decision on participation by the German armed forces was due in November 2001.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Gerhard Schröder, “Regierungserklärung vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Lage nach Beginn der Operation gegen den internationalen Terrorismus in Afghanistan,” October 11, 2001, http://www.documentArchiv.de/brd/2001/rede_schroeder_1011.html (accessed March 12, 2008).

¹⁴⁹ Annelie Buntenbach et al., “Berliner Aufruf: Positionspapier der Abgeordneten von Bündnis 90/Die Grünen zum Antrag der Bundesregierung zur Bereitstellung deutscher bewaffneter Streitkräfte,” November 11, 2001, <http://www.documentarchiv.de/>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

¹⁵⁰ Elizabeth Pond, “The Dynamics of the Feud Over Iraq,” in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 32.

¹⁵¹ Dietmar Wittich, “Anhaltender Krieg und bleibende Skepsis,” <http://www.uni-kassel.de/fb5/frieden/themen/Medien/wittich.html> (accessed March 12, 2008).

In the context of the parliament's decision on the actual participation of the German military in Afghanistan on 16 November 2001, Gerhard Schröder had to exert pressure on his coalition by linking it with a vote of confidence according to article 68, paragraph 1 of the German Constitution.¹⁵² He was willing to put the government, his career, and his political reputation at stake to align the discordant coalition and thereby achieve acceptance of his personal conviction. Schröder's assessment at that time was "that the United States responded in the only rational way to the psychic shock which they suffered from the wound of 'Ground Zero', by the formation of a worldwide coalition against terrorism."¹⁵³ This implied a multilateral approach by the Bush administration with Germany as a reliable ally. As claimed in his statement for the government on 19 September 2001, he was convinced that by providing support, Germany would be consulted and "get a voice in further military operations in the Middle East. According to the motto of smart practitioners of power politics 'If you can't beat them, join them.'"¹⁵⁴ The vote in the German Parliament was marginally in favor of the contribution in Afghanistan. The resolution of the parliament on 16 November 2001 stated, "The German Armed Forces will participate in possible operations against international terrorism in foreign countries (other than Afghanistan) only with the agreement of the respective government."¹⁵⁵ In effect, Gerhard Schröder could only obtain a limited mandate for future operations after Afghanistan, which meant that the German position of "unlimited solidarity" was actually very limited. He certainly would have obtained a much stronger mandate if he had not linked the vote for the mission in Afghanistan with a vote of confidence, since he could count on conservative support on this issue, but he had definitely risked the governing coalition.

¹⁵² Deutscher Bundestag, "Antrag an den Bundestag Nr. 14/7440 by Gerhard Schröder," November 13, 2001, http://www.bundestag.de/aktuell/hib/2001/2001_301/01.html (accessed March 12, 2008).

¹⁵³ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 187.

¹⁵⁴ Jürgen Hogrefe, *Gerhard Schröder – Ein Portrait* (München: Siedler, 2002), 211.

¹⁵⁵ Gunter Hofmann, "Der lange Weg zum lauten Nein," *Die Zeit*, no. 05/2003, 3.

In late September 2001, the former chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, who personally experienced the troubles caused by inadequate consultations (Chapter IV.3), underlined the importance of consultations between the United States and its allies as the guarantor of success in the war against terrorism. "The American administration and Congress can count on the will of solidarity of Europe and Germany. It could only be compromised, if Washington lacked information and consultation or might not react accordingly."¹⁵⁶ The relationship between Germany and the United States was still close in the first months after the start of the war in Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring Freedom. Gerhard Schröder did not see any sign of a hidden agenda in the war against terrorism. "At the end of the year, it seemed to be clear that even for the USA, it was a matter of calling perpetrators to account, who acknowledged themselves as the perpetrators on video- and audio tapes of the terrorist attacks in New York and the Pentagon."¹⁵⁷

3. The Attacks of 9/11 – Impacts on American Foreign Policy

When the first plane crashed into the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001, George W. Bush was reading to a class at an elementary school in Florida. Although George W. Bush insisted on returning to Washington D.C. as soon as possible, he did not arrive before the evening of the same day in the U.S. capital, since it was assumed that the president might be another target of the terrorists. After he had returned to the Oval Office, George W. Bush addressed the nation with his first official speech after the terrorist attacks. This speech was hastily drafted in the chaotic conditions of that day and only revised by his perennial advisor, Karen Hughes, and it can be assumed that the chosen words would mirror Bush's personal attitude more than later ones. David Frum, one of his regular speechwriters, confirmed this assumption by derogatively

¹⁵⁶ Helmut Schmidt, "Die Antwort? Weder Hass noch Rache," *Die Zeit*, September 27, 2001, no. 40, 1.

¹⁵⁷ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 185.

stating that, “the speech Bush had delivered was not a war speech. It was a hastily revised compassionate conservatism speech.”¹⁵⁸ Although Bush stated, “we stand together to win the war against terrorism,”¹⁵⁹ he avoided promising retaliation against the attackers and overall used moderate and compassionate words. The international reaction was one of broad approval to the sober-minded president, but it was unclear whether the American population would judge it the same way. The president’s rhetoric would change dramatically in the course of the next months.

In the absence of Bush from Washington, Vice President Dick Cheney, who was still familiar with the catastrophe procedures of the Cold War, managed the crisis of the threat against the White House as did Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in the Pentagon, which was itself a scene of battle and carnage. The decision to assign the crisis management responsibility to these two veterans from a former cabinet seemed to be the right decision to George W. Bush. On his flight back to Washington, the president had decided that a military reaction to the attacks was due, and stated in a phone call to his Secretary of Defense: “It’s a day of national tragedy, and we’ll clean up the mess and then the ball will be in your and Dick Myers’s [designated chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] court.”¹⁶⁰ Bush later recalled two thoughts; first, “This was a war in which people were going to have to die. Secondly, I was not a military tactician. I recognize that. I was going to have to rely on the advice and counsel of Rumsfeld, Shelton, Myers and Tenet.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ David Frum, *The Right Man – The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Random House, 2003), 128.

¹⁵⁹ George W. Bush, “Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation on the Occasion of the Terrorist Attacks of 9/11,” (September 11, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html> (accessed March 12, 2008).

¹⁶⁰ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 19.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 37; Note: General Richard B. Myers was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who followed General Hugh Shelton on 1 October 2001. George John Tenet was the Director of the CIA from 1997 until 2004.

For the same evening, a meeting of an expanded National Security Council (NSC) was scheduled with the aim of discussing the objective of the U.S. military response to the terrorist attacks. Since the Secretary of State was still on his flight back from Peru, Powell was not involved in the far-reaching foreign policy decision “to punish whoever harbors terrorists, not just the perpetrators.”¹⁶² In a subsequent gathering of the war cabinet, still on 11 September, Afghanistan was identified as the first out of numerous countries that were assumed to harbor the terrorists of the Al Qaeda group, which was found responsible for the 9/11 attacks.¹⁶³

On 14 September 2001, George W. Bush visited New York City. Here, in the center of the catastrophe, he was overwhelmed by the impression he got from the patriotic Americans chanting, “USA! USA!” The Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, who accompanied Bush, pointed at the shouting crowd. “‘You see those people cheering you?’ he asked Bush. ‘Not one of them voted for you.’”¹⁶⁴ Giuliani’s statement may not have been entirely correct. However, he made a valid point; at this moment, the people addressed all their hopes to the president and demonstrated that the American people were united. Charles E. Cook, Jr. stated that, “the Bush administration seemed to be adrift until the tragedies of September 11. A wave of patriotism and national unity, along with the president’s greatly improved performances ... propelled his job approval ratings as high as 91 percent.”¹⁶⁵ If George W. Bush had not known previously what his presidency would stand for, in the wake of 9/11 he found his personal mission: He told his advisor, Karl Rove, “I’m here for a reason, ... and this is going to be how we’re going to be judged.”¹⁶⁶ This assumption is consistent with

¹⁶² Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 31.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶⁴ David Frum, *The Right Man – The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Random House, 2003), 139.

¹⁶⁵ Charles E. Cook, Jr., “On the Homefront: Politics as Usual?” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2002, Vol. 25, no. 1, 238.

¹⁶⁶ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 81.

his character (Chapter II.1) and his disposition to follow superior visions and objectives and might have been the reason for his future personal commitment in the war on terror and in foreign affairs. Stephen Szabo concluded that later reversals had disproportionate effects on him, “because of George W. Bush’s highly personalized approach to foreign policy.”¹⁶⁷

One week later, on 20 September 2001, Bush declared in his address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American people that the United States had a duty to wage a war against Islamic terrorists, but stressed that terrorism was not directly linked to a religion. “The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.”¹⁶⁸ His choice of words was still moderate and one might see his personal, compassionate handwriting. In the aftermath of his speech, his approval rating climbed to its highest levels. The task of organizing a multinational coalition against terrorism, including rather problematic countries such as Pakistan, determined Colin Powell’s agenda in the succeeding days.

The war in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom), was started on 7 October 2001 – only 26 days after the terrorist attacks – and soon brought the first military success. George W. Bush, who found his vocation in the war on terrorism, performed in a way that was not expected. After his inauguration, many critics saw Bush as a “stupid cowboy” from Texas. In December 2001, this view turned into admiration for some former critics. For instance, the British magazine *The Economist* offered a positive interim statement on the successes of Bush in the time after 9/11: “Barely three months after September 11th, Mr Bush has masterminded a stunning victory (fingers crossed) in a country that

¹⁶⁷ Stephen F. Szabo, *Parting Ways – The Crisis in German-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 32.

¹⁶⁸ George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” November 20, 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed March 20, 2008).

was once known as the graveyard of empires. Al-Qaeda is in retreat. And the world's leaders, even that Pakistani guy he once found he couldn't name [note: when Bush was questioned by a reporter during his campaign in 2000], are competing to be George W.'s best friend.”¹⁶⁹ Despite the fact that George W. Bush used a multinational approach in Afghanistan, the course of action indicated that the allies played only a minor role. “The European governments’ only objection to the American military campaign in Afghanistan was that they were allowed only in a minor role in it.”¹⁷⁰ Since Operation Enduring Freedom was the first strike directly related to 9/11, and due to the experience of the Kosovo War, which demonstrated the military weakness of Europe, the European critics of the coalition approach adopted by the United States – which the critics incorrectly called a “unilateral” approach – kept silent in this early stage of the fight against terrorism, but they would raise their voices later.

B. THE COURSE OF EVENTS 2002 – SCHRÖDER’S DENIAL OF SUPPORT

The moderate rhetoric of the Bush administration in early 2002, regarding the war against terrorism, changed to a much stronger type, and the objective became more ambitious. Already in late December 2001, the speechwriter David Frum was asked to “sum up in a sentence or two our [U.S.] best case for going after Iraq.”¹⁷¹ The result was the phrase “axis of evil.”

In his State of the Union Address on 29 January 2002, George W. Bush made clear that the “war on terror” in Afghanistan was just the beginning, and named Iraq, Iran and North Korea as future objectives in this war for the first time. “States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction,

¹⁶⁹ Lexington, “For family and fraternity,” *The Economist*, December 22, 2001, Vol. 361, 52.

¹⁷⁰ Elizabeth Pond, “The Dynamics of the Feud Over Iraq,” in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 33.

¹⁷¹ David Frum, *The Right Man – The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Random House, 2003), 224.

these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. ... In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.”¹⁷² The last sentence at least gave a hint that the Bush administration was moving toward a preventive-minded strategic approach. In the same speech Bush said, “We’ll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer.”¹⁷³

Only two days later, Gerhard Schröder flew to Washington for a meeting with George W. Bush and recalled later that he had some discomfort with the visit, since he and his colleagues expected a new dimension in the U.S. fight against terrorism, in view of the “almost biblical wording” used by the American president.¹⁷⁴ Although Bush assured Schröder that no decision on Iraq had been made, Schröder stated that a German contribution would depend on the same restrictions as in the case of Afghanistan. That is, Germany would participate in a military engagement only with approval by the UNSC.¹⁷⁵ From Schröder’s perspective, the Bush administration was on the way back to the unilateral policy that characterized the first months in 2001. Additionally, Bush’s choice of words – e.g. “evil” – was like Ronald Reagan’s, an attitude Schröder rejected (Chapter II.3). The personal relationship between the two heads of government cooled in the first quarter of 2002. In fact, the new policy of the United States increasingly challenged Schröder’s position in Germany, which was problematic anyway.

1. The Shift in U.S. Security Policy

It soon turned out that Iraq could become the next step in the war against terrorism. Iraq had been an intermittently occurring topic within the NSC in the White House since the inauguration of the administration. Secretary of Defense

¹⁷² George W. Bush, “State of the Union Address,” January 29, 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/print/20020129-11.html (accessed March 20, 2008).

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 197.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 197.

Donald Rumsfeld first brought up the issue of Iraq in the constituent assembly of the NSC in January 2001.¹⁷⁶ In this meeting, Colin Powell noticed after he reported on the situation of the Palestinian-Israeli relationship that, “The discussion moved on, and it quickly became apparent that powerful voices around the table were far more interested in Iraq than in the bogged-down Mideast peace process.”¹⁷⁷

On 5 February 2001, the NSC gathered again, and instead of supporting Powell’s approach to re-shape the sanctions against Iraq, the president eventually approved a proposal by Rumsfeld to loosen the rules of engagement for aircraft pilots, even outside the no-fly zones in Iraq, which meant that “The United States would no longer feel constrained about using its military on the ground of Iraq.”¹⁷⁸ The subsequent U.S.-British air strikes against targets in Iraq outside the already controversial no-fly zones on 16 February 2001 were a quick implementation of the new guidelines and demonstrated, at an early stage, the close collaboration of the United States and the United Kingdom on the issue of Iraq. Among others, the British newspaper *The Guardian*, excoriated the support of Prime Minister Tony Blair for Bush’s policy.¹⁷⁹ From George W. Bush’s perspective, this incident revealed the consequences that flow from decisions based on the recommendations of his NSC advisors.

When President Bush actually made his final decision to attack Iraq in the context of the “war on terror” is not conclusively clear. Paul Wolfowitz suggested already in September 2001, in the damaged Pentagon, on the occasion of an informal visit from Joschka Fischer, that Saddam Hussein was the second

¹⁷⁶ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier – The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 315.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁷⁸ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier – The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 317.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Norton-Taylor, “Raid shows Bush-Blair bond on Iraq,” *The Guardian*, February 19, 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/feb/19/usa.iraq2> (accessed March 20, 2008).

objective after the Taliban.¹⁸⁰ According to Bob Woodward, George W. Bush ordered Rumsfeld to start updating the already ongoing war plan for Iraq on 21 November 2001, which indicates that Iraq was evaluated, in all likelihood, as a future target.¹⁸¹ Probably, the post-9/11 anthrax attacks in the United States spurred the perceived need to act even more decisively. Whether Iraq had already become a priority target for Bush at that time or might become one of secondary importance, a shift in U.S. foreign policy definitely became apparent. “The neoconservative policy shift after 9/11 transformed the United States from being the guarantor of the status quo, ... into a revolutionary power and supplanted the USA’s collaborative Cold War leadership with a more muscular, unilateral, and crusading exercise of hegemony.”¹⁸²

The focus on Iraq, in the context of the “axis of evil” in the State of the Union Address, was made apparent by the president, personally. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, publicly stated how the United States intended to conduct future operations at the “Munich Conference on Security Policy” on 2 February 2002. At least two elements of this speech caused broad skepticism among European participants. Schröder called it “the second phase of the war on terror.”¹⁸³ First, Wolfowitz stressed the shift in U.S. security policy to preventive self-defense, which was controversial in international law. “As Secretary Rumsfeld said recently, self-defense ‘requires prevention and sometimes preemption.’ It is not possible to defend against ‘every threat, in every place, at every conceivable time.’ The only defense against terrorism is to ‘take

¹⁸⁰ Gunter Hofmann, “Der lange Weg zum lauten Nein,” *Die Zeit*, no. 05/2003, 3.

¹⁸¹ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 81.

¹⁸² Elizabeth Pond, “The Dynamics of the Feud Over Iraq,” in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 30.

¹⁸³ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 197.

the war to the enemy.”¹⁸⁴ Secondly, the NATO allies, in the fight against terrorism, were implicitly marginalized when Wolfowitz repeated one of Rumsfeld’s observations. Wolfowitz said, “One of the most important concepts concerns the nature of coalitions in this campaign and the idea that ‘the mission must determine the coalition, the coalition must not determine the mission.’ Otherwise ... the mission will be reduced to “the lowest common denominator.”¹⁸⁵ Since the Secretary of Defense had previously made the same statements and there was no objection from George W. Bush, the new strategy apparently was in line with views at the White House. However, one might ask why the Pentagon had such a superior influence in shaping U.S. foreign policy. The successes of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan gave Bush confidence that the United States could wage the war alone, although he preferred to have an international coalition, and he enjoyed building one for the war in Afghanistan.¹⁸⁶ The U.S. approach to the fight against terrorism seemed to have tremendously changed in the first weeks of 2002, and this was not the result of a multinational consensus, but of a unilateral decision. In February 2002, any plan to make Iraq a main objective of U.S. action was still linked to the “war on terror.”

2. The Calm before The Storm

On 22 and 23 May 2002, George W. Bush’s visit to Germany was scheduled. In his memoirs, Schröder noted with regard to this visit, “It was tangible, how much the sympathy for *this* president had changed in the population, *too*.”¹⁸⁷ Schröder’s choice of words suggests that by May 2002, the

¹⁸⁴ Paul Wolfowitz, “Speech at the 38th Munich Conference on Security Policy,” February 02, 2002, http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2002=&id=69&sprache=en& (accessed March 20, 2008).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 334.

¹⁸⁷ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 198; emphasis added.

relationship, from Schröder's perspective, was determined by disapproval of Bush's policies. Stephen Szabo estimated that "This visit later turned out to be one of the pivotal events in the unraveling of the Bush-Schröder relationship."¹⁸⁸

The visit went more smoothly than expected. At a special session of the German Parliament, Bush returned to moderate words and expressed support for a multilateral approach in facing the threats of terrorism, although he again used the phrase "axis of evil." "Our response will be reasoned, and focused, and deliberate. We will use more than our military might. ... America will consult closely with our friends and allies at every stage. But make no mistake about it, we will and we must confront this conspiracy against our liberty and against our lives."¹⁸⁹ In the press conference prior to the session in parliament, both George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder expressed their agreements on current issues ("there is a tremendous amount of agreement between the two of us") and underlined that, with regard to an upcoming war in Iraq, no decision had been made. Schröder additionally stressed the peaceful approach: "And we're very much agreed that we have to do whatever we can to bring a peaceful solution to this conflict [the entire Middle East]. I mean, we must make sure that no further escalation happens over there," but he also "emphasized very strongly that the President's speech in Washington was a milestone regarding this situation."¹⁹⁰ If he were referring to the Address to the Nation in February 2002, he would have contradicted his critical assessment on Bush at least partially. Based on information that is not available to the thesis author, Stephen Szabo stated that in the context of Bush's visit to Berlin, "There was an implicit agreement that neither of them would make war with Iraq an issue before the German election, which

¹⁸⁸ Stephen F. Szabo, *Parting Ways – The Crisis in German-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 19.

¹⁸⁹ George W. Bush, "President Bush Thanks Germany for Support Against Terror," May 23, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020523-2.html> (accessed March 21, 2008).

¹⁹⁰ Gerhard Schröder and George W. Bush, "Press Conference on the Occasion of the Visit of the President of the United States," May 23, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020523-1.html#> (accessed March 21, 2008).

was coming up in September.”¹⁹¹ It can be taken for granted that the German chancellor did not confront the American president, who called Schröder a friend during his visit, with a German “no” on a war against Iraq on the last personal occasion prior to the election. Schröder described good personal relations between himself and other political leaders as “helpful” but not necessary for successful politics.¹⁹² Overall, he was comfortable with the visit of Bush in May 2002. On the personal level, however, reservations prevailed.

Despite the relaxed atmosphere, there was something that bothered me and aroused my suspicion: Again and again, even in our talks in confidence, it could be heard to which extent this president understood himself as ‘god-fearing’ and in line with his higher powers. ... The problem I have with this kind of position starts where one cannot help but think that political decisions are a result of prayers. ... The claim of the absolute that I met over and over again in the year 2002, not only in conversations with the American president, but also in his public statements, raised my political skepticism.¹⁹³

At the time of President Bush’s visit to Germany in May 2002, Schröder entered the final phase of his re-election campaign, which would end with the national elections in October 2002. Hence, it can be assumed that his statements and decisions, both domestically and internationally, were at least indirectly linked to that precious date.¹⁹⁴ The approval rate for the governing coalition in June 2002, just after Bush’s departure, increased from 5 percent to 48 percent and was ahead of the challenging liberal-conservative parties by 6 percent. The approval rate for the chancellor climbed strongly, by 8 percent, up to 56 percent.

¹⁹¹ Stephen F. Szabo, *Parting Ways – The Crisis in German-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 20.

¹⁹² Jürgen Hogrefe, *Gerhard Schröder – Ein Portrait* (München: Siedler, 2002), 215.

¹⁹³ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 200-201.

¹⁹⁴ Note: The polls in Germany are periodically inserted in the following paragraphs until the German Election Day in order to analyze changes in Schröder’s approval rate, since one widespread argument is that the election was a crucial driver for the upcoming discord (Chapter I.). All data are from ARD DeutschlandTREND, on: <http://www.infratest-dimap.de> (accessed March 22, 2008).

However, if Germany had to vote in June 2002, the majority would have preferred the CDU as the strongest party in parliament, whereas more than a third of the electorate stated that they had not finally decided which party to vote for in October. The polls underlined that the chancellor still was the SPD's strong personality in the popular perception. This would not change until Election Day, but his party could not always benefit sufficiently from his popularity. After a downturn in July, however, the polls predicted a marginal surplus for the red-green coalition in August 2002.

3. The Confrontation of Different Stances

Soon after returning from his journey to Europe, President Bush delivered a graduation speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and publicly noted for the first time that he was about to shift American policy toward a rather idealistic "mission" in terms of shaping the globe, instead of solely fighting global terrorism. "We have our best chance since the rise of the nation state in the 17th century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war. ... America stands for more than the absence of war. We have a great opportunity to extend a just peace, by replacing poverty, repression, and resentment around the world with hope of a better day."¹⁹⁵ The shift in U.S. policy might have been caused by Bush's awareness that the unity of the coalition in the fight against terrorism was gradually disintegrating and that the allies were attaching restrictions to their support, as stated by Gerhard Schröder.¹⁹⁶ It certainly was not only the fragmenting international coalition that drove him, but also the vanishing domestic support, which was required to get the approval of Congress for further operations.

From Bush's perspective, resistance to his policy would weaken his position; on the other hand, Gerhard Schröder had to take popular resistance to

¹⁹⁵ George W. Bush, President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point, June 01, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> (accessed March 21, 2008).

¹⁹⁶ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 327-328.

Bush's policy line into account. "Both Schröder and Fischer had already sensed great uneasiness among crowds at campaign rallies about both the prospect of war and the perceived recklessness of Bush, and the audiences they addressed applauded any assurances that they would not be pulled into a war in Iraq."¹⁹⁷ In July 2002, Gerhard Schröder brought himself to oppose a war in Iraq. He stated the reasons for his decision publicly in a session of the Executive Committee of his party on 1 August 2002.¹⁹⁸ He personally became more and more critical of a possible war against Iraq because of the changing objectives that were stated by the Bush administration. In February 2002, in direct line with the supported fight against terrorism, the Bush administration added Iraq to a list of several "evil" countries without a broad international consensus on the global hotspots of terrorism or on the preventive way to proceed. In June 2002, Bush shifted the main objective to the "idealistic" goal of global peace. The justification for a war on Iraq was not coherent anymore, and Bush's peace advocacy and other rationales could be perceived as pretended arguments. On 26 August 2002, Vice President Cheney addressed the VFW 103rd National Convention and declared that a quick reaction in the case of Iraq, without further resolutions by the United Nations Security Council would be the best option. "A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his [Saddam Hussein's] compliance with UN resolutions. On the contrary, there is great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow 'back in his box.'"¹⁹⁹ In the same speech, Cheney brought up "regime change" and the danger of "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq as new components of the justification for a war, which completed the lack of coherence in the American reasoning. Whether one favors

¹⁹⁷ Stephen F. Szabo, *Parting Ways – The Crisis in German-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 22.

¹⁹⁸ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 207.

¹⁹⁹ Richard Cheney, "Vice President Speaks at VFW 103rd National Convention," August 26, 2002, www.whitehouse.org/news/releases/2002/08/print/20020826.html (accessed March 22, 2008).

regime change is a matter of political perspective. Regime change in itself, however, is against the background of international law, definitely no legitimization of a war against a country.

Gerhard Schröder's opposition to the probable war against Iraq, which he instrumentalized in his favor in the re-election campaign, was not an isolated position, but one based on widespread doubts about the credibility of the argumentation for a war, since there was no convincing evidence for Cheney's WMD allegations. Schröder's assessment at that time was shared among numerous observers in many countries and, as revealed in May 2005 by the *Sunday Times*, this included even the United Kingdom, the closest ally of the United States during the entire controversy on Iraq.²⁰⁰ The new spin in the Bush administration's Iraq policy found opponents not only in Europe and the Middle East, but also within the United States, which hardened the pressure on George W. Bush. For instance, James Baker III, Secretary of State under George H.W. Bush, advised against the plans to pursue a regime change in Baghdad without involving the United Nations, although Baker did not oppose regime change itself. "So how should we proceed to effect regime change in Iraq? Although the United States could certainly succeed, we should try our best not to have to go it alone, and the president should reject the advice of those who counsel doing so."²⁰¹

The argument that Gerhard Schröder only opposed the upcoming Iraq War in order to win re-election cannot stand, since there was widespread opposition to Bush's Iraq policy in the summer of 2002. No evidence could be found that would support the view that Schröder was cynical about his anti-Iraq War stance and regarded it as mere party politics. However, he definitely benefited from his role as the "chancellor of peace." After an increase in his approval rating in August, caused by his crisis management in a severe flood in

²⁰⁰ Michael Smith, "Blair Planned Iraq War From Start," *The Sunday Times*, May 01, 2005, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article387237.ece> (accessed March 22, 2008).

East Germany, where he underlined his sober decision-making capability under pressure, he additionally gained approval by voters due to his anti-Iraq War policy.

In the first week of September 2002, 75 percent of the German population was against a unilateral U.S. attack against Iraq and 50 percent rejected the idea of a German contribution in a war against Iraq. The other half of the population still supported the international coalition and German participation in an operation against the threat deriving from Iraq, whereas a vast majority wanted to see the UN involved. These views did not significantly change until the election. The strict opposition to the Iraq policy of the United States by Gerhard Schröder, however, was appreciated by 69 percent of the Germans and represented a considerable sign of German assertiveness toward the superpower USA.

With regard to the perception of the United States (Chapter III.1.b) by the German population, and even more by the German chancellor personally, the image had shifted dramatically toward the “trigger-happy sheriff” category in terms of emphasizing “military power as a tool of foreign policy.” Until late September 2002, the discord was still on the factual level, determined by different opinions on how to deal with a threat from Iraq. As stated in the joint press interview in May 2002 in the garden of the chancellery, the general evaluation of Saddam Hussein was the same.

The analysis of the transatlantic relationship, with special attention to the 9/11 event and its aftermath, discloses profound changes in the foreign policies of Germany and the United States, and their effects on the political and personal relationship between George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder. From the very beginning of the Bush administration, U.S. foreign policy showed a unilateral stance (e.g., with regard to the Kyoto Protocol) that seemed not to take the concerns of other countries into consideration. This attitude changed under the impact of the terrorist attacks in September 2001. In order to cope with the

²⁰¹ James Baker III, “The Right Way to Change a Regime,” *The New York Times*, August 25, 2002, 4.9.

threats of international terrorism, the United States, under Bush's leadership, felt obliged to shift its policy toward a multilateral approach.

Additionally, the 9/11 attacks had a decisive effect on the personal level. George W. Bush found the purpose of his presidency in the fight against terrorism, and he was willing to commit himself in an extraordinary way. At the same time, Gerhard Schröder risked his political career and the governing coalition in Germany to support the United States and again to demonstrate the reliability of re-unified Germany after the Kosovo War in 1999. The prematurely perceived success by the U.S.-dominated military operation in Afghanistan accelerated the momentum of Bush's foreign policy. In this context, apparently owing to a perception of American supremacy, Iraq became a near-term objective in "the war on terror."

Due to the lack of evidence of a relationship between terrorism and Iraq, the Bush administration changed its justification for a war against the dictator Saddam Hussein several times. In summer 2002, Gerhard Schröder publicly opposed the American policy the first time. The Bush administration had previously stated that it would act alone, if necessary. According to the German chancellor, it was not only the policy itself that provoked his opposition, but also the presumption of Bush's claim to the absolute truth. The positive result for Schröder's re-election campaign is apparent; however, the open opposition had effects on the rhetoric rather than on the decision against the war itself. George W. Bush found his purpose in trying to transform the world while fighting terrorism and other global threats. Gerhard Schröder found the purpose of his second term in opposition to the war in Iraq in order to protect the world from "adventures." Schröder put the reputation of Germany's foreign policy at stake when he stated that Germany would not participate in a war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq even if such a war were approved in a resolution of the United Nations Security Council.

C. THE ESCALATION OF DISCORD

On 19 September 2002, the discord was still on the factual level, but this changed the following day, when the German Minister of Justice, Herta Däubler-Gmelin, made an unclear comparison of the policies of George W. Bush and Adolf Hitler. Gerhard Schröder, who knew that the bilateral relationship had already been tested, immediately sent a personal apology to the U.S. president, stating, "I want to let you know how much I regret the fact that alleged comments by the German justice minister have given an impression that has offended you."²⁰² The apology, however, was not accepted by the White House, since Bush expected an instant dismissal of the German Justice Minister; and Condoleezza Rice as well as Donald Rumsfeld accused Germany of having "poisoned" the relationship at that time.²⁰³

Bush's reaction to the Däubler-Gmelin incident revealed the personalization of the escalating discord between the two leaders and certain underlying issues of character as concerns the chief personality involved, as well as his ideal of statecraft. "The president was so angry that he told his staff that he wanted to read every statement on Germany coming out of the White House. He left the impression that he had decided to personally oversee the U.S. reaction."²⁰⁴ After Schröder's victory in the 2002 election, Bush refused to congratulate his German counterpart,²⁰⁵ and in the following months, the rhetoric against Germany intensified with the egging on of various groups with an anti-German and anti-EU agenda. Donald Rumsfeld's verbal division of Europe into a

²⁰² CBS News, "Bush Gets Apology For Hitler Remark," September 20, 2002, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/21/world/main522862.shtml> (accessed April 13, 2008).

²⁰³ Yvonne Esterhazy and René Gribnitz, "USA verschärfen Ton gegen die Bundesregierung," *Financial Times Deutschland*, September 22, 2002, <http://www.ftd.de/politik/international/1032719440109.html> (accessed April 23, 2008).

²⁰⁴ Stephen F. Szabo, *Parting Ways – The Crisis in German-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 135.

²⁰⁵ James Geary, "Collision Course," *Time Magazine*, September 29, 2002, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,356044,00.html?iid=chix-sphere> (accessed May 15, 2008).

new and an old part and his snubbing of Germany's Defense Minister at the meeting of NATO defense ministers in Poland in September 2002 were only two examples among others.²⁰⁶ The reason for Bush's harsh over-reaction is not absolutely clear, but it could be explained by his perception of being betrayed by Schröder, who had promised not to instrumentalize Iraq in his re-election campaign. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the opposition of a previously close ally, Germany, implied the risk that even more countries would step out of line in the campaign against international terrorism.

The Bush administration was not alone in excessively personalized and undiplomatic responses. Schröder's government added fuel to the flames. For example, Ludwig Stiegler, Chairman of the SPD faction, in September 2002, publicly compared the American president with the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus and U.S. Ambassador Daniel Coats (whose behavior aroused scorn from critics of the Bush administration) with the former Soviet ambassador in the German Democratic Republic, during the height of the Cold War, Pjotr Abrassimov.²⁰⁷

On 17 September 2002, the Bush administration released a new National Security Strategy (NSS) that endorsed the preemptive use of force for the first time, in an official document, after occasional hints in speeches of White House officials such as Vice President Dick Cheney on 26 August 2002 (see chapter V.2.1).²⁰⁸ Numerous critics evaluated the actual nature of the preemptive use of force prescribed in the NSS 2002 as an announcement of an intention to conduct preventive wars. For instance, Robert Pape concluded that, "the strategy against rogue states fits with the more aggressive policy of preventive war, a fact recognized in the Bush administration's own national security strategy

²⁰⁶ James Geary, "Collision Course," *Time Magazine*, September 29, 2002, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,356044,00.html?iid=chix-sphere> (accessed May 15, 2008).

²⁰⁷ Der Spiegel, "SPD-Breitseite gegen Bush erzürnt die Union," September 7, 2002, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,212989,00.html> (accessed April 23, 2008).

²⁰⁸ The White House, "National Security Strategy," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2002/index.html> (accessed April 23, 2008).

statements.”²⁰⁹ Against the background of the increasing likelihood of a war in Iraq in the fall of 2002, the new strategy was regarded as a further sign of momentum in that direction.

In October 2002, the Congress authorized the president with an overwhelming majority to use the U.S. military “as he determines to be necessary and appropriate” to defend U.S. national security “against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.”²¹⁰ In November 2002, expectations of an early strike against Iraq were muted when Bush followed Colin Powell’s advice to focus on diplomacy in the UN. The efforts in the UN demonstrated the U.S. attempt to pursue a multinational approach or at least to obtain UN Security Council approval for the use of force by a coalition. George W. Bush’s decision was strictly against the recommendation of Cheney and Rumsfeld, who favored a firmly unilateral policy and who previously had an essential influence on the president’s shift in foreign policy in 2002. During the process of drafting a speech for a new UNSC resolution on Iraq, “Cheney and Rumsfeld continued to press. Asking for a new resolution would snag them in a morass of U.N. debate and hesitation, opening the door for Saddam to negotiate.”²¹¹ On 8 November 2002, the UN Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1441 and recalled “that the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations.”²¹² The resolution did not explicitly authorize the use of force in the event that Iraq failed to disarm its WMD facilities or to cooperate with the weapons inspections of the UN. In other words, it was left open whether a second resolution would be required to authorize the use of force to compel Saddam Hussein to cooperate.

²⁰⁹ Robert A. Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005), 26.

²¹⁰ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 351.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 346.

²¹² UN Security Council, “Resolution 1441 (2002),” <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/682/26/PDF/N0268226.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed April 23, 2008).

At the same time, Gerhard Schröder pursued a double strategy. On one hand, he was interested in revitalizing the traumatized German-U.S. bi-lateral relationship by assuming more military responsibility in Afghanistan. He also guaranteed support for an Iraq intervention within the context of NATO obligations in terms of German permission for the United States and its coalition partners to use airbases in Germany, German participation in airborne AWACS, and a loan of German Patriot anti-missile systems. On the other hand, his strict stance against a war in Iraq had not changed and he was intent on an uncompromising position on any American attempt to wage a war in Iraq.

1. Schröder's Shift Back to Anti-War Rhetoric

Schröder underlined his personal commitment on this issue by stating, "Deep inside I was strongly inclined to resign rather than compromise on this issue. Moving away from opposition to the Iraq war did not come into question."²¹³ However, until 25 January 2003 he avoided making public statements against the Bush administration's Iraq policy and made several attempts to improve the bilateral relationship. During an election campaign in his home state of Lower Saxony, notably in Goslar, he supported the state SPD that suffered from a nationwide decline of approval and he returned to his anti-war rhetoric and played the Iraq card again. He addressed the following message to the United States, "Don't count on Germany voting in favour of a resolution that would legitimise a war. Never again will there be a Germany of aggression."²¹⁴ Schröder used the stage of the election campaign to counter his foreign minister's previous attempts to weaken the strict stance of the German government that had refused to support the use of force even under a UNSCR in the fall of 2002; this position was against the German government's political

²¹³ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 231.

²¹⁴ Tony Paterson, "Anti-War Stand 'Won't Save Schröder Again,'" *Telegraph*, January 25, 2003, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/01/26/wschr26.xml> (accessed April 23, 2008).

guideline of multilateralism and institutionalism. In February 2003, *Der Spiegel* reported severe intra-governmental tensions between the chancellor and the foreign minister because Fischer was afraid of political isolation while Schröder pursued his personal policy and did not consult his foreign minister prior to his Goslar statements. This was a pattern typical of Schröder's personality; he had often created facts via the media.²¹⁵

Once again, one might argue that Schröder acted purely according to election tactics. Gregor Schöllgen argues that such tactics played a role, but not the decisive role. The crucial reason for Schröder's political course was his previous experiences in the context of the Afghanistan mission in 2001, not the upcoming state elections.²¹⁶ Additionally, it can be assumed that Schröder actually wanted to use all means to avoid a war based on his personal conviction, since he always had the option of simply not contributing to the war instead of actively opposing it. In the judgment of Elizabeth Pond, "the chancellor's defiance of the United States this time was a deliberate policy choice to magnify rather than minimize differences."²¹⁷ In Schröder's view, arguments against a war in Iraq were eventually vindicated by the results of the U.S.-led intervention. Schröder had warned that the territorial integrity of Iraq was at stake as well as regional stability in the Middle East. There was also the risk of a weakening of the broad coalition in the fight against international terrorism, the likelihood of a social and political situation in Iraq that would make the establishment of democracy and a liberal economic system difficult, and the possibility of a cultural clash of civilizations in the Middle East.²¹⁸ The fact that Bush rejected all attempts to normalize the "poisoned" relationship in the period

²¹⁵ "Koalition – Beziehung mit Knacks," *Der Spiegel*, February 10, 2003, no. 7/2003, 17.

²¹⁶ Gregor Schöllgen, "Die Zukunft der deutschen Außenpolitik liegt in Europa," Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, no. B11/2004, 9.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth Pond, "The Dynamics of the Feud Over Iraq," in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 44.

²¹⁸ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 220 - 221.

from October 2002 to January 2003 certainly influenced Schröder, too. As David M. Andrews observed, “the White House’s deep and continuing censure of Gerhard Schröder ... helped drive the somewhat reluctant German leader into the arms of Jacques Chirac – two men who had never previously been particularly cordial.”²¹⁹

2. European Opposition to the Bush Administration

In the final phase of the prelude to the war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, Germany held a seat on the UN Security Council as a nonpermanent member without a veto. In order to prevent a second legitimizing resolution for an attack on Iraq, Chancellor Schröder started to build a coalition with France and Russia, both permanent members of the Security Council and each with a veto. In effect, Gerhard Schröder tried to shift his personal conflict with George W. Bush to the United Nations Security Council.

In the French president, Jacques Chirac, Schröder found a like-minded leader who had already expressed disapproval of a unilateralist approach during the UNSCR 1441 discussions in the Security Council in November 2002, although he had not opposed that resolution publicly. After consultations with Schröder on the fortieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty on 20 January 2003, (a treaty between France and Germany arranged by de Gaulle as an alternative to the close postwar German-American relationship in 1963) Chirac decided to pursue a policy in the Security Council that was focused on UN inspections in accordance with UNSCR 1441, rather than on military might. The French announced a possible veto against the American approach. The French foreign

²¹⁹ David M. Andrews, “Is Atlanticism Dead?” in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 257.

minister, Dominique de Villepin, declared that it would be "a victory for the law of the strongest," if Washington attacked Iraq without the explicit authorization of the UNSC.²²⁰

Schröder's attempt to align the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, with a position opposed to that of the United States in the Security Council was not as successful as the previous one with France. Although Putin favored the disarmament of the Iraqis and publicly opposed a military intervention, he avoided any indication that Russia would impose a veto. Presumably, Putin wanted to retain his close relationship with the United States. Four months earlier, Josef Joffe, an astute German expert, claimed, "Russia has (almost) become America's best partner-in-arms."²²¹

The different nuances of the three European countries' positions on the Iraq question apparently led to Condoleezza Rice's harsh statement in the spring of 2003, "Punish France, ignore Germany, forgive Russia,"²²² which seemed to describe accurately how Bush dealt with these European powers. Bush's reaction was not only of a rhetorical nature, he directed his administration to pursue diplomatic support. George W. Bush's team succeeded in creating a European coalition, in contrast with Paris, Berlin and Moscow that strongly supported the U.S. administration's hard line. One of the results was a joint declaration by eight leaders of European governments in the *Wall Street Journal* on 30 January 2003, which demonstrated the European division on this issue.²²³

²²⁰ Serge Schmemmann, "The Quarrel Over Iraq Gets Ugly," *The New York Times*, January 26, 2003, 4.1.

²²¹ Josef Joffe, "The Alliance is Dead. Long Live the New Alliance," *The New York Times*, September 29, 2002, 4.3.

²²² Philip H. Gordon, "Punish France, Ignore Germany, Forgive Russia' No Longer Fits," Brookings, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2007/09europe_gordon.aspx (accessed April 28, 2008).

²²³ Jose María Aznar et al., "United We Stand - Eight European leaders are as one with President Bush," *Wall Street Journal*, January 30, 2003, <http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110002994> (accessed April, 28, 2008). The eight countries represented by their leaders in this statement were the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

A further demonstration of division within Europe came on 6 February 2003, when ten additional European countries expressed support for the U.S. position on Iraq.²²⁴

After bilateral German-U.S. tensions starting in 2002, and dissents in the UNSC and within Europe on the Iraq issue at the beginning of 2003, the dispute spilled over into the last “sacrosanct” institution that had served the entire transatlantic region to overcome the post-World War II Soviet threat and which remained a framework of security for all of its members: NATO. In February 2003, the United States tried to invoke the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article 4 on behalf of Turkey in the case of a probable Iraqi threat during the upcoming war. Schröder, in company with France and Belgium, refused this request, since it would demonstrate that within NATO a diplomatic solution of the Iraq conflict had already been dismissed and that NATO as an institution was involved in war preparations.²²⁵ In fact, although Turkey later directly requested support under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, it seemed to the German government and others to be an active approach by the Bush administration to increase pressure on the “coalition of the un-willing” within NATO. “As a German official put it, ‘We promised to supply the Patriots to Turkey bilaterally and asked the United States please not to force us to be an obstruction within NATO. But the Bush administration was determined to make life difficult for Schröder by having Germany vote yes to the deployment, thus undermining the chancellor’s own position against the Iraq war.’”²²⁶

Despite attempts by the United States to convince the UN Security Council with evidence of the existence of WMD in Iraq, the expected stalemate in

²²⁴ Jeffrey Donovan, “Eastern Europe: Vilnius Group Supports U.S. On Iraq,” *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, February 6, 2003, <http://www.rferl.org/features/2003/02/06022003175020.asp> (accessed May 12, 2008). The ten countries represented by their leaders in this statement were Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

²²⁵ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 225.

²²⁶ Phillip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at war – America, Europe, And the Crisis Over Iraq*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 140-141.

the Security Council, due to a French veto and further opposition, led Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, who had previously insisted on a second UNSC resolution for domestic support, to agree with President Bush on the need to attack Iraq in any case.²²⁷ After the approval of military action in the House of Commons on 18 March 2003, on 20 March 2003 joint U.S.-British air strikes began in Iraq without a second legitimizing resolution of the UN Security Council.

Schröder's attempts to prevent a war in Iraq had failed and he still found Germany more or less diplomatically isolated. Just before the attacks started, Chancellor Schröder expressed once more his personal stance on a war in Iraq: "Does the scale of the threat from the Iraqi dictator justify the launch of a war that will certainly bring death to thousands of innocent men, women and children? My answer in this case has been and remains: No."²²⁸

D. DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE IN THE TRANSATLANTIC AREA

1. An American Perspective

In order to analyze the personal influence of George W. Bush on the dispute between Germany and the United States on the Iraq issue, it is necessary to set his attitudes, decisions and statements in a broader context. This section investigates the extent to which the "Bush Doctrine" was in line with the views of the main political parties and public opinion in the United States.

Since Congress in October 2002 authorized the president to use the U.S. armed forces to defend U.S. national security "against the continuing threat posed by Iraq," it can be assumed that there was broad approval for President Bush's policy in the political elite. Otherwise, the mechanism of checks and balances would have failed after the terrorist attacks in September 2001. The domestic opposition, or at least a controversial public debate, was reduced to a

²²⁷ Richard Norton-Taylor, "Blair-Bush Deal Before Iraq War Revealed in Secret Memo," The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/feb/03/iraq.usa> (accessed April 28, 2008).

²²⁸ Gerhard Schröder quoted in Penny Spiller, "New start for US and 'old Europe,'" BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4250701.stm> (accessed April 23, 2008).

relatively small number of commentators, political leaders, and scholars, and their overall impact was marginal in 2002 and 2003. In contrast, a substantial, open discussion was held in Europe; but it did not have any significant influence on the American debate and policy.

Michael Desch argues that the reason for the overwhelming support for President Bush's policy in the prelude to the Iraq war was the deep-rooted U.S. liberalism that basically approved an active American foreign policy and explicitly favored a strategy that spreads democracy.²²⁹ Lawrence Kaplan wrote in 2003 that, "Bush is becoming the most Wilsonian president since Wilson himself."²³⁰ Both major political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, shared the basic liberal stance in the general sense and hence public arguments against the democratization rationale were rare until the costs of the Iraq war mounted. The examples of U.S. presidents and their foreign policies discussed in Chapter IV showed that in the past, whatever the administration's party affiliation, most presidents have favored a rather active U.S. role in global security policies.

Against the background of a common liberal stance in the United States, it is not surprising that in the course of 2002, the justification for an invasion of Iraq shifted from the war against terrorism to the search for WMD and finally the ideal of democratization of the Middle East. With regard to the variety of the Bush administration's justifications for the war, Andrew Denison concluded that one reason would not have been enough to convince the American public and other countries, in contrast with the first Iraq war in 1990-1991.²³¹ A poll in the United States showed that the following three arguments were assessed to be the most convincing "good reasons" to attack Iraq in March 2003: prevention of the spread

²²⁹ Michael C. Desch, "America's Liberal Illiberalism – The Ideological Origins of Overreaction in U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/2008) 18.

²³⁰ Lawrence F. Kaplan, "Regime Change" *New Republic*, March 3, 2003, 21.

²³¹ Andrew B. Denison, "Unilateral oder multilateral? Motive der amerikanischen Irakpolitik," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 24-25/2003, 19.

of WMD (85 percent), liberation of the Iraqi people (84 percent), and maintaining the leading role of the United States and its values (77 percent).²³²

In general, acceptance of the use of force in order to obtain justice can be assessed as high in the United States. In 2003, 84 percent of Americans agreed with the necessity of the use of military power under certain conditions.²³³ Ronald Asmus et al. concluded that, “an American President – irrespective of his political persuasion – has considerable leeway in terms of building public support when it comes to the use of force.”²³⁴ Apparently, the chosen strategy of George W. Bush did not face significant domestic opposition.

However, on one particular issue the majority of Americans deviated from the Bush administration’s political line, because the majority favored a multinational approach. As late as January 2003, 56 percent agreed that the United States “should not invade unless a new UN vote authorizes action.”²³⁵ In other words, in addition to British pressure and Colin Powell’s advice to get a Security Council mandate prior to attacking Iraq, public demand also encouraged Bush to go the UN way. These reasons may have prompted the American president not to follow his unilaterally oriented advisors, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, as he did before, when he shaped his security strategy.

When the U.S.-German relationship on the governmental level turned into a “poisoned” one and subsequently George W. Bush decided to ignore Schröder’s objections to his Iraq policy, one might ask whether the American people also changed their attitude toward Germany. In the period from June 2002 to June 2003 positive feelings toward Germany decreased, but they were

²³² Andrew B. Denison, “Unilateral oder multilateral? Motive der amerikanischen Irakpolitik,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 24-25/2003, 20.

²³³ The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo, “Transatlantic Trends 2003 – Topline Data,” July 2003, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications>, 48 (accessed May 17, 2008).

²³⁴ Ronald Asmus, Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia, “Power, War and Public Opinion” *Policy Review*, February/March 2004, 79.

²³⁵ Bruce W. Jentleson, “Tough Love Multilateralism,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2003-04, Vol. 27, no. 1, 20.

still positive (from 63 down to 56; a value higher than 50 means favorable).²³⁶ According to the same poll, the rate of decline, however, was exactly the same as the European average (64 down to 57), Italy (68 down to 61) and Great Britain (68 down to 61). In this context, it is noteworthy that the two latter countries were among President Bush's strongest supporters in West Europe during the crisis over the Iraq war. Hence, one might conclude that Europe as a whole lost the American public's favor and the neglect of Schröder's Germany by the Bush administration was more of a reaction on the personal level.

George W. Bush had retained a high public approval rate since 9/11. His security policy change in 2002 also got broad support, because its elements regarding the use of force and the willingness of the United States to actively shape the international security environment found broad domestic approval as well. This, nonetheless, did not apply to the policy chosen on how to attain these political goals. As noted earlier, the majority of Americans favored a multinational coalition, unlike Bush, who regarded it as desirable but not necessary, and a multinational authorization for the use of force in the UNSC.

With regard to international relations, though the American people became a little more skeptical toward all European countries during the Iraq crisis, the majority did not express their perception in stereotype patterns, as their president did, but maintained their rather benevolent stance toward foreign countries. The latter applies especially to Germany, which the Bush administration "ignored," and to a lesser extent to France, which was to be "punished" for the announced veto in early 2003. George W. Bush's personal involvement in foreign policy seemed to have led him to react to Schröder's opposition in a way that was not backed by the majority of the American people and that was not sound from a diplomatic viewpoint.

²³⁶ The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo, "Transatlantic Trends 2003 – Topline Data," July 2003, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications>, 22 (accessed May 17, 2008).

2. A German Perspective

As outlined above, in the period from 11 September 2001 until early summer 2002, George W. Bush was able to unite a nearly global coalition in the “war on terror” or – the common term in Europe – the “fight against terrorism.” The formerly overwhelming international support, however, eroded in the course of 2002. This development was caused mainly by the shift of American foreign policy toward a perceived aggressive approach that changed from a combined, multinational coalition against international terrorism to ad hoc coalitions of the willing under American predominance, and focused on objectives that were no longer solely related to the threat of terrorism.

Since summer 2002, Germany, under Chancellor Schröder had been one of the harshest opponents of the Bush administration’s policy. In his re-election campaign, the incumbent chancellor first expressed criticism in a factual way and later shifted to categorical opposition. Schröder’s chosen course lifted his approval rate and contributed at least partially to his re-election. According to polls, his stance on the Iraq issue was in line with that of the German people and their general rejection of the use of force. In 2003, only 12 percent of the German public agreed with the proposition that under certain conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice, which was contrary to the view of 55 percent of the public in the United States.²³⁷ In the specific case of Iraq, 85 percent of the Germans opposed the use of military force.²³⁸

Yet, the reasons for the different stances on the use of force might derive from different cultural or historical values in the two countries, since the seemingly most obvious reason, differing threat assessments, did not apply. In the new security environment as of 2003, Americans (70 percent) and Germans

²³⁷ The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo, “Transatlantic Trends 2003 – Topline Data,” July 2003, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications>, 48 (accessed May 17, 2008).

²³⁸ Ronald Asmus, Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia, “Power, War and Public Opinion” *Policy Review*, February/March 2004, 83.

(74 percent) saw in international terrorism the most important threat and, with regard to other possible perils, the public assessments in the two countries were not far from each other.²³⁹ However, the similar threat assessments led to neither the same analytical conclusions nor to the same policy prescriptions. The vast majority of Germans (84 percent) strongly favored the imposition of economic sanctions instead of the use of military force (11 percent) in order to counter threats.²⁴⁰

German citizens indeed perceived a high level of threat from terrorism, but they did not believe that they were at war as the Americans did. Two *New York Times* reporters analyzed the above differences just before Bush traveled to Europe in the summer of 2002 and concluded: "The Europeans clearly do not believe that they are at war. They are worried that Mr. Bush may drag them into a new war in Iraq, destabilize the Middle East and put enormous strain on NATO."²⁴¹

That the Germans disagreed specifically with President Bush's foreign policy rather than holding a general negative attitude toward Americans was confirmed by opinion polls. Already in 2002, 62 percent of the German public disapproved of the way George W. Bush handled foreign affairs (this increased to 81 percent in 2003), whereas the decline in German support for the United States in general was much smaller.²⁴² These numbers suggest that subliminal anti-Americanism, deliberately triggered by Chancellor Schröder, might have been a catalyst for the discord, but that the shift in Bush's foreign policy was the real issue from a German perspective and that the legacy of doubt about the

²³⁹ Ronald Asmus, Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia, "Power, War and Public Opinion" *Policy Review*, February/March 2004, 19-21.

²⁴⁰ The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo, "Transatlantic Trends 2003 – Topline Data," July 2003, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications>, 37 (accessed May 17, 2008).

²⁴¹ Steven Erlanger and David E. Sanger, "Bush Begins Mission to Assure Europeans He Wants Their Advice on Global Hot Spots," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2002, A 10.

²⁴² The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo, "Transatlantic Trends 2003 – Topline Data," July 2003, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications>, 7 (accessed May 17, 2008).

utility of war had been deeply rooted in the German people since 1945. This inference is backed by Robert A. Pape, who concluded that “the main concern of other states is not with the goals of U.S. policy, but with the means, especially with the Bush administration’s willingness to use unilateral military action to achieve otherwise acceptable goals.”²⁴³

Despite the predominant rejection of the use of armed force in Germany, there was some broad opposition to Schröder’s one-sided approach in the prelude to the Iraq war. During the national election campaigns in the fall of 2002, the candidate of the conservative CDU/CSU party, Edmund Stoiber, then Bavarian State Governor, and Guido Westerwelle, the chairman of the FDP liberal party, stressed the importance of a strong transatlantic relationship, the significance of the UN Security Council and the value of coordination and consensus within the European Union – all of which they saw as jeopardized by Gerhard Schröder’s anti-Bush campaign.²⁴⁴ Besides the ongoing political party opposition to Schröder, there was also harsh criticism in the “hawkish media” in Germany, as Schröder put it.²⁴⁵ For instance, among other periodicals, the German newspaper *Die Zeit* questioned Schröder’s ability in statecraft in view of his absolute rejection of the Iraq war, even in the case of a UNSC mandate. Josef Joffe of Stanford University and *Die Zeit* argued that Schröder’s position undermined international institutions and Germany’s bargaining power in Washington.²⁴⁶ In this context, the anti-war attitude itself was not the object of criticism, but rather the way in which Schröder articulated German policy.

²⁴³ Robert A. Pape, “Soft Balancing Against the United States,” *International Security*, (Summer 2005) Vol. 30, no. 1, 25.

²⁴⁴ “Stoiber sieht SPD auf dem Irrweg,” *Der Spiegel*, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,209104,00.html> (accessed April 30, 2008).

²⁴⁵ Gerhard Schröder, *Entscheidungen – Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2006), 210.

²⁴⁶ Josef Joffe, “Staatskunst – Berlin, Washington und das Gesicht der Staatsräson,” *Die Zeit*, no. 40/2002, 1.

VI. CONCLUSION

The cultural and structural split in the transatlantic relationship between the United States and Germany had already begun in the years since 1989 – that is before George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder took office. The historical examples of relationships between American presidents and German chancellors, reviewed in Chapter IV, showed that disputes between the two countries had important precedents to that of 2002. Since the late 1940s, there had been controversies, including different general approaches to foreign affairs and discussions about the role of Germany within the NATO alliance in terms of burden- and responsibility-sharing. Since the 1970s, a new West German assertiveness, based mainly on increasing economic power, had emerged. The Federal Republic of Germany demanded a more prominent position within the transatlantic framework in terms of consultations and political influence.

In this context, the personal relationship between the heads of government in the two countries played a significant role and partially mirrored the extent of U.S. acceptance of a more prominent role for Germany. For instance, the personal controversies between Jimmy Carter and Helmut Schmidt were influenced by an American failure to recognize the importance of Germany, and in the case of George H.W. Bush and Helmut Kohl, the amicable relationship led to a special bond between the two countries. Whatever the level of amity or animosity, the bi-lateral relationships had one decisive attribute in common: even the most contrarian political or personal positions had never erupted in tensions that would have challenged the transatlantic bond itself. Statecraft, diplomacy and the ability to weigh the importance of the alliance prevented the protagonists from prioritizing short-term benefits over long-term common goals.

One has to acknowledge that until 1989, the common external threat of the Cold War had certainly served as a centripetal force. The bi-lateral relations in the aftermath of the Cold War, however, proved that even without this uniting factor, statesmen on both sides of the Atlantic were able to retain this special

relationship. The two countries accepted their specific leadership roles: the United States as the only superpower and Germany as an integrating catalyst of a united and peaceful Europe. Although cultural differences – especially about the use of military force and governmental spending for security – persisted, the necessity for adjustments regarding these issues was accepted by Europe in general, and Germany in particular, after the Balkan crises of the 1990s.

Though until 11 September 2001, the tense political environment had not changed significantly, one could observe that after the inauguration of George W. Bush in January 2001 the bilateral relationship had gradually changed. It later reached unprecedented heights of personal animosity over the Iraq crisis. An immoderate level of personalization of foreign policy as well as a temporary lack of diplomacy and statecraft may explain this development on both sides of the Atlantic. Instead of seeking reconciliation and compromise, as their predecessors had, both statesmen, the German chancellor and the American president, served as significant drivers of the growing division between the United States and Germany.

The discord over the Iraq crisis revealed not only the different personalities of the two protagonists and the different behavior patterns evident in their previous careers, but also similarities in their characters, which paradoxically, widened the transatlantic gap.

A. DIFFERENCES IN DECISION MAKING

When Gerhard Schröder took office in 1998, he was at the height of a long, bright political career that started in the far left of the political spectrum in the 1960s and gradually shifted to the center of the spectrum. A high level of pragmatism, some might say opportunism, determined his vocational development. In order to gain political power and prestige, two of his decisive goals, he often focused his politics on public approval and frequently demonstrated his make-or-break attitude. In this context, he was not afraid to

make use of the media in his favor and even created facts without previous party consultations, which caused tremendous irritation in the SPD establishment.

However, the keys to Schröder's political success that eventually brought him into the chancellery were his high level of popularity and his determination to follow his personal instincts uncompromisingly and not to rely on partisans. Against the background of his previous political career and decision-making process, it is not surprising that he decided on one hand to declare unconditional solidarity with the United States almost instantly, and without conclusive consultations after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, and, on the other hand, in view of the upcoming Iraq war in the final phase of the re-election campaign in 2002, yet again without consulting his advisors or his coalition partner, he decided to oppose the war with an absolute rejectionist campaign. Since the latter implied a rejection of the use of force even under the auspices of a UNSCR, his decision broke with the legacy of German foreign policy determined by multi-lateralism and institutionalism and furthermore caused tremendous tensions with his Minister of Foreign Affairs. With regard to the United States, Schröder's approach to bi-lateral relations was ambiguous. On one hand, he was well aware of the importance of the transatlantic partner in terms of economic interdependence and America's crucial role as a security provider. On the other hand, he was critical of the dominance of the United States and of conservative governments in Washington in general.

In contrast with Schröder, George W. Bush's political career began only in his mid-forties and was mostly based on elite social networks, support from his politically influential family, and his personal ability to inspire others with his "straightforward" Texas manner and strategic, conservative ideas suited to a large portion of the U.S. electorate at the turn of the century. Due to his limited political experience, he relied, as Governor of Texas and as President of the United States, to an exceptional extent, on the advice of his carefully recruited staff of experts. His overarching political objectives were the re-establishment of

conservative values and a strong international position for the United States with a central role for military power. He believed in the moral imperative of faith-based behavior and keeping one's word.

George W. Bush's decision-making process was mostly determined by his style of leadership. He saw his position in the government as the leader of a team with strategic ideas and as the final decider without the need for more comprehensive insights. Hence, his final decisions normally resulted directly from the proposals of his more or less autonomous staff. As a consequence, depending on the issue and the commitment of the respective advisor, Bush's decisions reflected the advisor's recommendations to a large extent. This was of particular importance in the Bush administration, since at least two different political camps significantly influenced U.S. foreign policy. On one hand, the rather moderate and multi-laterally oriented State Department under Colin Powell, as well as National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, affected the decision-making process of George W. Bush. On the other hand, the neo-conservative and unilaterally oriented Defense Department under Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, as well as Vice President Dick Cheney, brought their influence to bear. Bush's decisions about U.S. security policy featured elements from both camps. However, the neo-conservatives seemed to overbalance the moderates after 11 September 2001. Furthermore, members of the latter camp instrumentalized their freedom of action within the administration more than others and actively promoted their ideas. For instance, Rumsfeld had already brought up the Iraq issue after the president's inauguration in January 2001 and suggested attacking Iraq after 11 September 2001.

With regard to the decision-making process of the two leaders, one could conclude that short-term publicity effects significantly influenced the German chancellor. Depending on the current situation, the American president's decisions were mostly based on the advice of different political camps in his administration, although the neo-conservatives were pre-dominant. George W. Bush and his administration had a rather neutral perspective on Germany and its

chancellor. Bush was well aware of the unchallenged might and superiority of the United States and therefore Germany did not play a significant role in his approach to foreign affairs.

The completely different life experiences, styles of decision-making and political cultures of the two leaders help explain their substantially contrasting political approaches in foreign affairs. Since their predecessors were able to overcome severe arguments even after the end of the Cold War, one should also address the similarities of Bush and Schröder that eventually drove them further apart.

B. SIMILARITIES OF THE TWO LEADERS

Gerhard Schröder and George W. Bush were both domestic policy-minded when they took office, and this was reflected in their initial election campaigns while seeking national office. However, the nature of Germany's closely institutionalized European ties, and the crisis in Kosovo, soon obliged the German chancellor to shift his attention to foreign affairs. Even George W. Bush, who explicitly tried to reduce the international commitments of the United States, was forced to place foreign policy at the top of his political agenda after 11 September 2001. The lack of experience in foreign affairs, which applied even more to the American president, implied that at the beginning of the respective terms of the heads of government, miscalculations and mistaken decisions on the international stage could not be excluded. The prudent way in which Schröder managed the Kosovo crisis and in which Bush handled the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks was, therefore, surprising. However, the subsequent pursuit of a common strategy on both sides of the Atlantic caused huge problems, which derived from both inexperience and differing cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, with Gerhard Schröder and George W. Bush, two leaders of government took office, one in Germany and one in the United States, neither of whom had any direct experience of World War II. The aftermath of this war

brought the two countries closer together than ever before and resulted in a sustainable security architecture that would contain the Soviet threat and promote prosperity in the entire transatlantic region. Apparently, Bush and Schröder both assessed these close ties as less important than their predecessors had regarded them, although Schröder never left any doubt about the importance of NATO as the guarantor of Germany's security. Despite his dispute with Bush over the Iraq war, he regularly stressed Germany's reliability within the NATO framework and even risked his political career in 1998-1999 (the Kosovo crisis) and 2001 (Germany's contribution to the operations in Afghanistan) in order to ensure the stability of this decisive treaty organization.

The most obvious similarities were the unprecedented style of rhetoric and the personalization of foreign affairs on both sides of the Atlantic. In the summer of 2002, each leader felt betrayed by his counterpart. On one hand, Schröder sensed that Bush did not intend to consult his German counterpart on the decision to wage a war against Iraq or on the strategy to fight international terrorism. On the other hand, Bush perceived dishonesty and decided to control further bi-lateral communication personally, when Schröder started to instrumentalize the Iraq war in his re-election campaign. The mix of different political stances and the high level of personal involvement elevated tensions.

The situation of mutual skepticism and misperceptions escalated into an emotionally driven dispute. In this context, one might ask about the role of the advisors and diplomats who could have taken the emotional component out of the discord. On the American side, the hawkish camp, especially Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, added fuel to the flames by the use of inappropriate rhetoric, and the U.S. president made no visible attempts to restrain them. On the German side, government officials and the Justice Minister, in particular, placed additional stress on the relationship. After the German national elections in September 2002, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, and the Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, tried to normalize the strained situation, but failed due to the uncompromising attitude of the Bush administration. When Schröder realized that

he had lost any hope for bargaining with his American counterpart, he thwarted all further attempts at reconciliation and started to organize a counter-coalition. The lack of sound statecraft on both sides of the Atlantic meant that the rising conflict eventually escalated in late 2002 and early 2003.

The two leaders of government, both uncompromisingly claimed moral superiority in this dispute, and this served as another emotional catalyst for the escalation. From George W. Bush's perspective, the new National Security Strategy of 2002 was a logical prescription in light of the changed global security environment after 11 September 2001. The fact that he gained both domestic and international approval immediately after the terrorist attacks until mid-2002 strengthened the position of the neo-conservatives within the Bush administration and seemed to confirm that he had chosen the only correct and commonly shared way to handle the crucial situation. To pursue the policy he had chosen, without wavering, and to believe in its success, reflected his personality.

From Schröder's perspective, the United States had abandoned the previous consensus of a global coalition against the threat of international terrorism. Bush seemed to ignore international law in order to follow a unilateral Pax Americana agenda that could initiate additional international conflicts rather than solve them. The shift in Bush's strategy, made without consultations with formerly close allies, might have confirmed Schröder's subliminal anti-American prejudices, and the perception of moral as well as political superiority prevailed. As a consequence, Schröder felt obliged to use any means available to prevent the upcoming war and disregarded the diplomatic consequences. In late 2002 and early 2003, the Bush administration tried to marginalize the most populous country in the European Union, a country that is still one of the decisive motors of the old continent in terms of economic outcomes, and which remains one of the most important architects of the extension of Euro-Atlantic institutions to the East since 1990. Bush's motives seemed to be public short-term satisfaction rather than prudent guidance in the role of a superpower. The undiplomatic U.S.

marginalization of Germany's role by the end of 2002 undoubtedly spurred Schröder's personal commitment to oppose the Iraq war.

The discord over Iraq could be seen as the final phase of a re-organization of "the West" after the demise of communism. Germany and the United States had to define their new political positions as well as the future. The two heads of government certainly embodied the extreme positions at that time. George W. Bush, influenced by perceived national vulnerability after 11 September 2001, expected a continuation of the unchallenged superior position of the United States and the alignment of long-standing allies. The initial broad support in Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001 did not lead him to expect massive opposition to his chosen course. Gerhard Schröder, on the other hand, saw Germany as a mature, independent country, and this was the continuation of a process that had already begun in the 1970s.

The global security environment, after the demise of the Soviet threat in 1989-1991, had definitely changed, and this made the formerly close transatlantic ties less important at first glance. With regard to the discord over Iraq, David M. Andrews put it in the following way: "Washington and Berlin are at liberty to pursue far more foolish policies in the early twenty-first century than ... during most of the late twentieth century."²⁴⁷ However, the transatlantic relationship is still the manifestation of the shared ideals of "the West," including its basic values of freedom, security and democracy. Judgments on the way to handle upcoming challenges and external threats, as well as how to pursue shared goals, continue to diverge due to cultural and structural differences. Hence, it should be the primary obligation of statecraft in Germany and the United States to re-align the relationship and transatlantic policies. The personalization of foreign policies and the articulation of claims to possess the absolute truth, as occurred in the discord over the Iraq crisis, are undoubtedly

²⁴⁷ David M. Andrews, "The Dynamics of the Feud Over Iraq," in David M. Andrews, ed. *The Transatlantic Alliance under Stress – US-European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 71.

poor guidelines for the future. Two great nations, whose former enmity has made the transition to a worthy alliance, cannot allow the security and peace of the Euro-Atlantic realm to fall prey to shortsightedness.

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